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Navigating Reentry Shock: The Use of Communication as a Facilitative Tool

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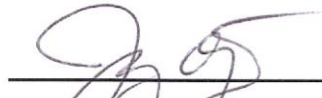
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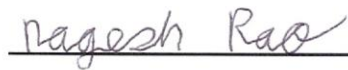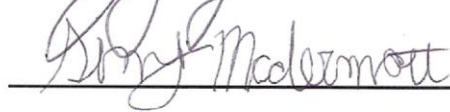
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NAVIGATING REENTRY SHOCK: THE USE OF COMMUNICATION AS A FACILITATIVE TOOL

BY

CAROLINE C. NIESEN

BACHELOR OF ARTS, WINONA STATE UNIVERSITY

THESIS

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of

**Master of Arts
Communication**

The University of New Mexico
Albuquerque, New Mexico

July, 2010

DEDICATION

Dedicated in loving memory of my grandmother, Dorothy, one of my biggest

cheerleaders and supporters (July 15, 1926—June 8, 2010)

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ABSTRACT OF THESIS

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M.A., Communication, University of New Mexico, 2010

ABSTRACT

Even though many university students travel and study abroad, there is minimal

literature and research about supporting these students when they return from their study

abroad experience. In order to understand and incorporate the experience into the

students' everyday life, communication plays a key role in facilitating the transition back

into the United States. Thus, the principal purpose of this study was to expand the

research on reentry shock and communication by creating a new scale of reentry shock

and testing a proposed model of variables to uncover which factor is most important

(individual, interpersonal, and cultural). One hundred fifty eight former study abroad

students responded to a 63-item survey about their experiences returning from study

abroad. The newly created, reliable, and validated scale, the Multifaceted Reentry Shock

Scale, was utilized to test hypotheses about the three factors. Even though there was a

strong rationale and extant literature support for all three variables to predict reentry

shock, the findings only show social support as the most important factor. The new scale

provides new ways for researchers to conceptualize and measure reentry shock, while the

social support variable is informative for future research as well as study abroad

programs at large.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

As a veteran study abroad student of three separate experiences, study abroad has been a source of personal strength, courage, confidence, and ambition. These experiences have also been a test for my interpersonal relationships with friends and family. When I returned back to the United States from each experience, I realized how much I had grown and how changed I was because of the experiences, but did not realize that life went on back home without me. The time I spent abroad was life changing, but coming home was far more difficult. I did not know how to cope with how much I had changed, nor did my family or friends. I found myself relating back to my experiences any chance I got, but I noticed the more I did that, the more my family and friends would lose interest in me.

Throughout my research in this area, I have found that many veteran study abroad students have similar experiences when they come back. However, they are not sure how to remedy their hunger to discuss such experiences while maintaining healthy relationships with friends and family. Discussing these experiences are ever important because without it, it is difficult to comprehend and incorporate these experience into educational, professional, relational, and everyday life. The current study looks at the role of communication in reentry experiences back into the United States and how it can facilitate the transition from being abroad to being back home.

Koester (1983) argues that, for returning participants, communication in relationships with friends and family is critical during the reentry transition. Through these interactions, returnees comprehend and interpret changes within themselves and the home environment. This allows them to readapt to the once familiar environment.

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"These significant others (friends, family) send messages, provide interpretations, and are a part of the reentry contexts which are central to communication" (Koester, 1983, p. 13). From a communication perspective, the way in which the returnee comprehends and interprets changes stemming from the intercultural experience is the essence of "reentry". Ultimately, in the current study, I argue that reentry shock is a communication phenomenon instead of an emotional state as previously studied (e.g., Oberg, 1960; Gullahorn & Gullahorn, 1966; Church, 1982; Gaw, 2000; Constantine et al., 2005). The level of reentry shock is dependent on how the study abroad participant interacts with others when returning from their study abroad experience.

People travel and stay abroad for many different purposes and time periods, but one common reason people go abroad is student exchange programs, similar to my own experience. What individuals who study abroad may not realize is how to incorporate that experience into their established lives in their home country and understand what it means to their everyday lives. Specific to this study, I am interested in what people go through when they return back to the United States and how communication can facilitate whatever that transition is to them. There is a gap between returning home and how to integrate that experience into everyday life and relationships. In order to fill that gap, I argue that communication is the missing link to a more successful reentry process for study abroad returnees.

Rationale for Study

U.S. Senate Resolution number 308 (2005) declared 2006 as the "Year of Study Abroad". This resolution, designed to encourage young adults to pursue higher education beyond U.S. borders, increased financial aid for those continuing study overseas as well

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as motivation for U.S. college students to be ambassadors in foreign countries. Since then, there has been an increase of U.S. American college students traveling abroad to fulfill higher education requirements (Institute of International Education, 2008). Goals of this declaration included developing a global understanding of other cultures with encouraging higher levels of study abroad participation. Senate members stated study abroad is "…an important way to share values, to create goodwill for the United States around the world, and to work toward a peaceful global society" (Senate Resolution #308, 2005). Not only is study abroad a valuable experience for the student but is also beneficial to the United States as a whole since each student serves as a representative of the country during his or her time abroad.

Further, the Commission on the Abraham Lincoln Commission Study Abroad Fellowship Program aims to send one million college students per year to study in other countries by 2017. Developed by late Illinois senator Paul Simon, the commission's goals include increasing national security, raising economic competition, expanding U. S. leadership, and strengthening engagement in the international community (Lincoln Commission's Report, 2005). Scholarship, fellowship, and financial aid monies will be increased for college students wishing to study abroad, echoing the goals of U. S. Senate Resolution #308. The events of September 11, 2001 increased awareness of such a need for younger generations to not only know of relations with other countries, but also to successfully build relationships with them as United States representatives.

Since more and more of the U.S. population are taking advantage of opportunities to fulfill endeavors abroad, it has now become a large business market as well. The number of study abroad participants from the United States has increased 150% over the

past decade, with under 100,000 studying outside the United States borders in the 1996/97 academic year in comparison to almost a quarter of a million in the 2006/07 academic year (Institute of International Education, 2008). This large number of participants accompanies a large number of organizations and programs within universities to build cooperative agreements with universities abroad, which then increases the need for more employees to support study abroad participants with planning and organizing their experiences. Reentry is an area that is often overlooked and is most important, so this study will help to provide evidence supporting the fact that reentry needs to be acknowledged and recognized by study abroad offices and the like. This will make experience full circle by debriefing its impact on the participant.

In order to take full advantage of the study abroad experience, even to decide to partake in such a journey, one must be open-minded to new experiences, be willing to communicate with diverse groups, and realize judging new or different cultures based on the U.S. American culture can affect communicative outcomes (Urban & Orbe, 2007). It is difficult to find a university, workplace, or city in the United States that is inhabited by individuals from the same country, culture, and background (Friedman, 2007). Because of this diversity and increasing globalization, it is vital for global citizens to be aware of differences among cultures and to be willing to interact with one another for a peaceful global society, which are the goals of the Lincoln Commission and the Year of Study Abroad, both proposed by the government.

Faculty, Peace Corps volunteers, military personnel, business officials, diplomats, tourists, technical experts, and missionaries are also continuing to pursue interests in other countries (Huff, 2001; Ward et al., 2001). With the high number of individuals

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studying abroad and returning, it is important to identify the struggles and challenges study abroad participants face upon return, which is considered the toughest part of the experience (Sussman, 2000, Szkudlarek, 2010). Noting the struggles and challenges will allow for better understanding, cooperation, and acknowledgement of differences to improve success and live in a peaceful global society that U.S. Senate Resolution 308 and the Lincoln Commission are aiming towards. Creating a model to describe and explain such a process will not only further the research in this area, but will improve the return process for study abroad participants in the future.

Since more and more international contacts are becoming increasingly common (Kim & Hubbard, 2007), it is important to continue studying this area as it changes. Intercultural communication as foreign markets, workers abroad, students, and many others have benefited from the study of intercultural communication (Rathje, 2007), thus it is necessary to continue this trend of expanding research. In order to continue to improve programs abroad and at home, this area of study abroad research needs to progress to better prepare future participants. Because of the fact that the world at large is now interconnected through globalization (Baraldi, 2006), intercultural communication encounters are almost unavoidable.

Yet communication patterns can be shocking because of the differences in cultural values and norms. Miller (1993) compared culture shock to the first day at a new job. The new environment, coworkers, boss, and tasks can be overwhelming and tough to deal with. Miller (1993) also compared it to driving a semi truck instead of a small, compact four-door sedan. The initial encounters driving a semi truck can be overpowering, but with practice and careful navigation, one can progress from the

compact car to the semi truck. This experience is similar to navigating through a new culture, dealing with the affects of culture shock, and learning from the experience. Models such as these examples are the beginning building blocks to more extensive models to illustrate the challenges and reasons for the experiences study abroad participants endure.

An important process to crossing international borders and returning from the experience is the reentry process and how one encounters both positive and negative reentry shock. Although a multitude of studies in the literature have looked at reverse culture shock and the reentry process as they relate to communication (Brein, & David, 1971; Martin, 1986; Lestrom, 1995; Smith, 2001; Pitts, 2006), these studies have not generated a reentry shock model to illustrate the variables that affect study abroad participants. This study is unique in that it proposes a reverse culture shock model that will be tested via a quantitative measure that is created through qualitative data.

In addition to the practical implications for this research, this study could begin to close the gaps in the research about reentry shock. Szkudlarek (2010) provided a in-depth, current, and comprehensive literature review about reentry shock, but does not include the impact of communication on reentry shock. Szkudlarek (2010) also noted the segmentation of this area of research, and I argue communication is the glue that holds this area together. Discussing and sharing experiences about returning can facilitate not only the participants' transitions, but it can also facilitate piecing the realm of reentry shock research together.

The purpose of this study is to examine the process of reentry shock by examining what is already known about reentry shock, how it relates to intercultural communication,

what it means for study abroad participants, and how this area can progress. Identifying what occurs upon returning home will allow for an easier transition to home for study abroad participants and improve the rate of success of integrating the experience into the study abroad participant's life, future career, and education. The broad theoretical frameworks used to guide this study will be cultural adaptation and culture shock as well as describing factors that influence what study abroad participants may encounter (both positive and negative) when returning home from the experience. Identifying the factors that influence a positive or negative readaptation will identify what variables influence outcomes of the reentry process.

Key Terms and Definitions

This study specifically looks at students participating in study abroad programs in order to improve the return process for future study abroad students. The population focus is U.S. American student study abroad participants in universities and colleges around the United States. I investigate the struggles and changes they face during the reentry process and propose a conceptual model of reentry shock. I present the model I created before data collection, and a second model, adjusted in accordance with the results of the study. My hopes for this study are that it will prepare future study abroad participants to handle reentry shock. Students who have studied abroad for four months or more within the past two years will be the focus of this study since the average semester is four months and the target populations for this study is university students. The requirement of within the past two years will allow study abroad participants to more easily reflect on their experiences.

Culture shock is a key term that will be used throughout this study in reference to stress and fatigue related to the adaptation process of being in a country that is dissimilar than one's home country (Lin, 2006). Lin also stated that culture shock is "...consistently associated with a series of symptoms of discomfort, dislocation, and abnormality" (2006, p. 119). Anxiety, stress, isolation, alienation, rejection, homesickness, and loss of normalcy are elements that relate to culture shock. Once one arrives to the host country, he or she must adjust to the environment and typically experiences many of these elements (Lin, 2006). By identifying what the participant encounters initially in going abroad, it will be easier to predict what participants encounter when returning home.

When the study abroad participant returns home, he or she may or may not encounter the same processes of culture shock, but in reverse in adapting to his or her home country. Reentry shock refers to an individual's difficulties and stressors in adjustment back to his or her home culture after completing an experience abroad (Martin, 1993). Similarly to the definition of culture shock, reentry shock relates to isolation, alienation, rejection, missing the experience abroad, anxiety, and stress once arriving home and adjusting back to his or her life in the United States (Gaw, 2000). One dissimilar component is returning study abroad participants change while abroad and have difficulty returning because others do not expect them to change (Martin, 1993). In this study, reentry shock is after one spends four months or more, but for no more than five years, in any other country than United States. From a communication perspective and specific to this study, the level of reentry shock is dependent on how the participant interacts with those around him or her in determining the severity of reentry shock he or

she encounters. Through this interaction, the study abroad participant learns how to comprehend the experience and that interaction essentially is reentry (Martin, 1986).

Although reentry shock is recognized as an important issue, the research in this area is segmented, disconnected, and is not addressed as it should be. Szkudlarek (2010) noted this fragmentation in her comprehensive literature review on the current processes, the people, and the practices of the reentry phase in an attempt to foster some cohesion is such a partitioned area of research. Based on her extensive review of literature, Szkudlarek identified four themes: a) modest support for the W curve hypothesis, b) minimal testing of the Cultural Identity Model, c) the lack of triangulation in reentry traveler research, and d) increased contact with participants and individuals that endure reentry shock to improve programs in support of individuals returning from experiences abroad. This study aims to begin the amalgamation process of this area of research by creating and testing a model of reentry shock, incorporating individual, interpersonal, and cultural elements that inevitably govern the severity of the reentry shock. Not only will this study create and test a model on these factors, but will also investigate which influencing factor is the strongest and how they interact with one another.

Summary

Advancing the area of research related to reentry shock is warranted because a large number of university students partake in educational opportunities outside the borders of the United States. By modeling this process and outlining the facets of influence on reverse culture shock, reentry shock can be better understood to advance this area that impacts many study abroad participants' lives. This study will begin the commingling process of a segmented area and describe the variables that have positive or

negative effects on the reentry process through a conceptual model, which one is most

salient, and how they interact with one another.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The following chapter reviews literature relevant to reentry shock. The first step to this process is to review the related literature by identifying the current theoretical approaches to cultural adaptation, factors related to positive and negative culture shock and reentry shock, and then present the hypotheses, research questions, and the conceptual model. The review of literature will inform the conceptual model and current study on which factors are most influential and how they interact with one another. Since reverse culture shock is a cognitive and emotional variable, the term reentry shock is more appropriate to this study in terms of discussing the experience of returning.

Theoretical Approaches to Cultural Adaptation

In order to begin the study of reentry shock, the variables of culture shock and various models are discussed to inform the current study. By investigating what has already been studied, researchers can decide what is missing to advance the area. By looking at what current culture shock models exist, it allows to create a model of reentry by identifying similar dimensions and how they interact with one another. I will first describe culture shock models, then identity, and lastly adaptation as the theoretical approaches to cultural adaptation as a whole. Each of these dimensions relate to reentry shock since it is a state of adjustment and communication assists in the adjustment process. The term utilized to discuss the participants will be study abroad participants, since the focus is on U. S. American college students that enter a host country for a predetermined amount of time and return to the home country.

Culture shock models. Many models of culture shock have emerged over the years (Lysgaard, 1955; Oberg, 1960; Gullahorn & Gullahorn, 1966; Brein & David,

1971; Barna, 1976; Befus, 1988). Researchers aim to label what travelers endure in order to improve programs through universities, companies, and organizations. This section identifies the research related to culture shock and culture shock models in order to discuss how they apply to the current study about study abroad and the reentry process.

Culture shock dates back to 1960 when Oberg made the term popular. Oberg described it as an anxiety-stricken phenomenon that is caused by the loss of familiar social interactions. He detailed culture shock as a process that individuals go through while in a new cultural environment, and identified four stages, also known as the U curve hypothesis. The first stage, the honeymoon stage, includes elation, extreme happiness, and curiosity with the new environment. The crisis stage then occurs, where individuals encounter frustration, irritability, anger, and apprehension. The third stage, the recovery stage, involves problem solving and appreciation for the new culture. The fourth and final stage, labeled as the adjustment stage, involves complete functionality in the environment along with reflection of the experience. Oberg stated travelers experience culture shock because of the lack of cultural awareness of the new culture. Travelers' own culture is deeply rooted and the codes of social conduct in the new culture are not known very well or at all. Oberg's conceptualization of the four stages of culture shock is an extension of the U curve hypothesis generated by Lysgaard (1955). Lysgaard proposed this hypothesis from a study on Norwegian Fulbright grantees in the United States, reporting that students in the United States for a period 6-18 months experienced a more severe sense of culture shock than those that stayed for a period of 6 months or less, or longer than 18 months.

The U curve hypothesis generated great curiosity in the study of culture shock. Gullahorn and Gullahorn (1966) discussed the U curve hypothesis students and professionals endured and also extended this hypothesis by adding another curve to complete the reentry and reverse culture shock stages into the W hypothesis. The W hypothesis proposed that individuals go through the same phases (honeymoon, crisis, recovery, and adjustment) upon reentering their home culture. Gullahorn and Gullahorn's U and W curve hypotheses sparked interest in this area for future studies.

In progression through the stages of culture shock, further studies found that high interaction with the host culture was also an important factor for adjustment. Brein and David (1971) asserted study abroad participants needed have a high amount of communication with the host nationals in order to adjust successfully. Developing a social relationship with the host nationals is crucial in obtaining social cues, learning conventions, and adapting to the new environment. The focus of Brein and David's study was through Gullahorn and Gullahorn's W curve process, where a participant first enters the spectator phase (initial euphoria of simply enjoying the sights and newness of the environment), and then the crisis phase (discovering the little language known is not enough and develops coping strategies to deal with stress). This first initial drop in the W curve of culture shock has usually the most intense stressors (Brein & David, 1971).

After the crisis stage, the study abroad participant goes through the recovery stage where he or she regains confidence and begins to feel more comfortable in the host environment. The complete recovery stage follows the recovery stage where the participant feels comfortable enough to enjoy being in the host environment. The last

and final stage is when the participant returns to the home environment. Brein and David (1971) state that this stage is as serious as culture shock first felt when in the host culture.

Emotional highs and lows are associated with the stresses of culture shock, more commonly known as the U and W hypotheses of culture shock. The U curve hypothesis was created to model the roller coaster journey of ups and downs throughout the culture shock adjustment period, and Gullahorn and Gullahorn (1966) extended the U to a W to incorporate the reentry process back into the home culture. Previous studies show the lack of support for the U curve hypothesis due to cross sectional research, where longitudinal research is more appropriate. Even so, Ward, Okura, Kennedy, and Kojima (1998) found contrary results to the U curve hypothesis with their longitudinal study. The participants had the most adjustment problems in the beginning of their experience and other culture shock related struggles decreased as the experience progressed.

Along with the U and W curve hypotheses, culture shock is a source of a variety of different changes for the participant. Barna (1976) identified other variables related to culture shock. Culture shock has myriad consequences on the participant, ranging from high stress to anxiety and behavior changes. Typically, the more the host country is different from the participant's home country, the more intense anxiety and behavior changes take place. Each participant, however, reacts differently based on upbringing and the new environmental factors. A large number of individuals do not quite feel completely relaxed nor feel debilitated, so stress tends to build up over time within the individual because of the constant state of flux by learning to deal with the unfamiliar context (Barna, 1976).

This state of stress affects one's ability to interact with the host culture. Since high stress tends to enact defense mechanisms in an attempt to cope, participants may withdraw and avoid interaction with the host culture altogether (Barna, 1976). Putnam (1954) stated that the most participants struggle the most with communication with the host culture. More correspondence with others that are from similar backgrounds may increase along with negative views towards the host culture (Barna, 1976). This negative view also influences how the participant interacts with the host culture and engages in defensive listening. The participant may "take offense when none is meant" (Barna, 1976, p. 12) and inhibit his or her chances of learning and growing from the experience.

Similarly to Barna, Befus (1988) recognized the high degree of stress caused by culture shock. Befus (1988) identified culture shock as a "period of transition and adjustment during which a person who has been relocated experiences some degree of anxiety, confusion, and disruption to living in the new culture" (p. 381). She also added that this transitional period adds distress and discomfort, which severely affects intercultural communication and continuing to research culture shock will improve international relations. Since not everyone experiences culture shock the same way or even at all, many theories and explanations have been produced in attempt to explain the complex phenomenon.

Previous research on culture shock and culture shock models are not connected and lack coherence overall. To provide a broader sense on adaptation, Kim (2005) described this process through a systems approach to provide insight on all of the micro and macro influences on the adaptation process. Since the previous literature is so segmented and disconnected and the results are contradictory, Kim (2005) stated it is

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difficult for the individual researcher to obtain a clear objective of previous studies and research. Grushina (2005) and Sobre-Denton and Hart (2008) also noted this discrepancy in the literature and describes the little external validity that has resulted from the disparate studies conducted as well as the loss of applicability in future research. "In spite of the variations in theory and methodology used in adaptation studies, one unifying theme has clearly emerged: all individuals who undergo cultural transitions—whether entering the country for the first time, returning to their home land, or regularly alternating places of residence—experience difficulties adjusting to the newly-entered environment" (Grushina, 2005, p. 3). Knowing and identifying these difficulties is key to promoting successful reentry experiences.

In this section, although the literature on culture shock is segmented and results vary from studies, it is noted that individuals endure hardship while pursuing various interests abroad and in returning home. The degree of hardship varies to each experience, each individual person and whether or not he or she encounters difficulties with intellectual, emotional, behavioral, or physiological changes. Although the research results from culture shock models are not consistent, these models are useful in their application. Even though each study abroad participant may or may not go through the variables outlined related to culture shock, it is important to outline and identify what *could* happen to prepare participants properly. A table of the culture shock models is presented in Table 1 below to visually represent models in the literature. Looking at what has already been researched, combining these variables into one cohesive model and continuing to study this area can improve international exchanges for study abroad participants in the future. Advocating the discussion of these experiences can improve

the difficulties study abroad participants encounter, it will allow them to comprehend the experience, and grow from it as an individual.

Table 1

Culture Shock Models

Type of Model	Author and Year
Introduced the U curve hypothesis	Lysgaard (1955)
Introduced the four stages of culture shock	Oberg (1960)
An extension of the U curve hypothesis known as the W curve hypothesis—added the reentry phase	Gullahorn & Gullahorn (1963, 1966)
Further extended the W curve hypothesis to include communication	Brein & David (1971)
Included anxiety and behavior changes related to culture shock	Barna (1976)
Recognized that not everyone experiences culture shock in the same manner	Befus (1988)

Identity. As mentioned in the previous section, individuals endure hardships when traveling abroad. Challenges to one's intellect, emotions, and behaviors can be common. How one deals with these challenges is identity based and is a salient factor relating to culture shock. First, family communication style is discussed because how one is raised influences one's identity and inevitably, the way one communicates. Second, personality is discussed since identity is shaped largely by personality. Third, stages of identity adjustment are described to identify how identity can really change through this type of experience. Fourth, group identification is included because how one associates with a group can have an impact when one is away from that group for a

given period of time. All of these variables are elements that affect one's identity during a study abroad experience.

Family styles of adaptation and acculturation are highly influential on one's identity during a study abroad experience. Neto (2002) discussed the various types of acculturation in studying immigrant family adaptation styles in Portugal. There are four different types of acculturation when entering a new society: assimilation, integration, separation, and marginalization. Assimilation refers to completely adopting a new identity in the host culture, integration is an amalgamation of the host culture and the home culture, separation is when one only interacts with individuals from the home culture, and marginalization is when one wishes to not hold onto any cultural ties whatsoever (Neto, 2002). These varying levels are important for the study abroad participant to be aware of so he or she can make a conscious decision about what he or she wishes to adopt. This is also important for the family to know so they can adjust accordingly to their study abroad participant.

Along with family styles of adaptation, another relevant variable in the adjustment process is the adjustment or change of personality. When entering a new environment, identity can be challenged and identity negotiation is common due to new experiences and environment. Kristjánsdóttir (2009) investigated the experiences of nine U.S. Americans in France to conduct research through the National Science Foundation. Interviews were conducted before the departure, during the experience, and after they returned to the United States. Through a phenomenological approach, Kristjánsdóttir uncovered various themes on what the participants faced based on their expectations for the experience, their fears and hopes, the challenges they faced while in the experience,

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and then the struggles they faced when returning as well as their favorite part about returning home. Part of identity formation is sharing common ground and similar social contexts (Collier, 2005) and that aspect was not shared by the U.S. Americans and France natives, generating tension on the cultural identity of the U.S. Americans. Since this was not a shared aspect of the adjustment process, a strain on identity occurred with these individuals, causing a great amount of stress.

Identity negotiation can result in a large amount of stress. In identifying the phases a study abroad participant goes through, this can help to track the changes and renegotiation of identity as well as clarify strategies on how to deal with this added stress. Munz (2007) identified four different phases a study abroad participant goes through during the experience. These four phases include anticipation, assimilation, adaptation, and integration. Through learning these phases of adaptation, participants could aspire to outcomes of improving relationships, reducing stress, navigating the host culture's language, and unlearning culture specific habits (Hajek & Giles, 2003).

The first phase, anticipation, is focused on the self and preparation for the international experience. This phase requires much self-reflection about who he or she is and what his or her objectives are for the experience (Munz, 2007). The anticipation phase calls for the participant to know his or her native culture as well as a general understanding of the host culture (Munz, 2007). Such understanding of oneself and the host culture assists in the transition between phases as well as throughout and afterward.

The second phase, assimilation, focuses more so on the host culture, with the participant soaking up as much knowledge as possible about the host culture to improve the adaptation process (Munz, 2007). Throughout this phase, participants adopt

characteristics of the host culture in order to function successfully in the new context, such as nonverbal cues, language phrases, and even styles of dress (Munz, 2007). The participant also neglects certain areas from the home culture and picks up more characteristics of the host culture, a bipolar process called acculturation and deculturation (Munz, 2007). This bipolar process is necessary to distinguish because it also marks changes in identity. Before and after the experience, the participant has changed in some shape or form purely because of the environmental change.

In the third phase, adaptation, describes the "functional relationship with the environment" (Munz, 2007, p. 15). The participant now has a routine, a decent grasp and understanding of the host culture, but is still learning and adapting from the continuing interactions with the host culture. Most of the success in the adaptation phase is due to the nonverbal cues and how the participant incorporates them into interaction with the host culture (Munz, 2007).

The last and final phase is the integration phase. This phase displays a new sense of Self and Other due to the previous three phases of participant adaptation. Through intercultural exchanges with the host culture, the participant merges characteristics of the host culture along with his or her native culture (Munz, 2007). This phase is the most obvious upon return, where individuals who knew the participant before experience notice behaviors and mannerisms that are not familiar and were not a part of the participant in the past (Munz, 2007).

These phases are necessary to identify because it will prepare the participant for possible identity changes. Anticipating challenges helps to overcome challenges that the participant may face. Munz (2007) stated transitions between these phases are

mechanisms (such as mindfulness and managing stress) that allow the participant to switch between phases, to integrate changes in identity, and develop coping strategies.

Similar to the U and W shaped hypotheses noted in the culture shock model section, identity goes through various stages while studying abroad. High stress is common, especially when there are no shared interests, behaviors, or similar ways of communicating. Identifying the stages one goes through will help to alleviate high stress and offer coping strategies for future study abroad participants. Identifying one's own communication style based on one's upbringing and family and comparing it to the host culture's dominant communication style will contribute to a successful adaptation to the host country. These stages are also similar to what one may go through when coming back and study abroad participants may have to renegotiate their identities once again in their home environments. Communication and self-reflection will help to facilitate that renegotiation.

Adaptation. A large part of the experience of traveling abroad is adapting to new surroundings. Once placed in an environment that is unfamiliar, one must adjust behaviors, mannerisms, states of mind, and oftentimes language. Many studies have been conducted on the various types of intercultural interactions that take place during international exchange, with adaptation, acculturation, and adjustment being the most popular sectors to study in attempt to better prepare participants for what they are going to encounter (Brein & David, 1971; Church, 1982; Grove & Torbiörn, 1993; Oguri & Gudykunst, 2002; Hess & Callahan, 2005; Kim, 2005; Grushina, 2005; Pitts, 2006; Sobre-Denton & Hart, 2008, Kristjánsdóttir, 2009). Adaptation, as referred to by Kim (2005), is "the internal struggle of individuals to regain control over their life changes in

the face of environmental changes" (p. 378). This definition is important because it not only applies to the initial adaptation process that begins with the mark of the study abroad experience, but also continues as the participant returns home and begins the reentry process. Kim's (2005) definition of adaptation is used in this study instead of adjustment or acculturation because culture shock and reentry shock are about a loss of control and Kim's (2005) definition is about a regaining of control. The following section outlines psychological adjustment, education on culture shock, the premiere studies identifying adaptation as an issue, and communicative adaptability.

Throughout the adaptation research on international exchange, a distinction was drawn between psychological and sociocultural adaptation. Psychological adaptation refers to the emotional well-being and personality adaptation and the sociocultural adaptation refers to cognitive and behavioral adaptation (Ward, Okura, Kennedy, & Kojima, 1998). Ward and Chang (1997) made the distinction between psychological and sociocultural adaptation in relation to how extraversion influenced adjustment of study abroad participants. There was no distinction between the two modes of adaptation, but Ward and Chang (1997) found the less extraverted the participant was, the more difficulties the participant had in adjustment.

By understanding the adaptation process, study abroad participants will know what to expect and can learn about coping strategies when faced with stressors in the new environment. Through education on the adaptation process, distinguishing coping mechanisms from defense mechanisms, study abroad participants can increase the amount of interaction with host nationals to deal with stress in a positive manner (Weaver, 1993). Identifying loneliness, loss of control, and helplessness as symptoms of

culture shock due to the adjustment process and are caused by not understanding what is occurring and why. The ability to discuss these openly will alleviate stresses related to new environment adaptation.

Gullahorn and Gullahorn (1966) were some of the first researchers to identify adaptation and individuals struggle when in an environment dissimilar to their status quo. These researchers allocated over 5,000 questionnaires and numerous interviews from Fulbright and Smith-Mundt participants from the United States in France to mark their personal and professional development over their international exchange. Results indicated that the younger students had a more difficult time adjusting to the lifestyle in France, whereas the older more professional individuals adjusted easier, even though the younger students had far more interaction with the host nationals. Gullahorn and Gullahorn (1966) speculated the easier adjustment for the older professionals due to well-adjusted lives back in the U.S. with jobs, established families, and lives in contrast to the student lifestyle of the younger students. Despite this binary result of adjustment, the younger, unmarried females reported the most satisfaction with the experience. This may be because they did not have professional ventures to complete and pressures of their jobs at home to make and establish international contacts.

Another important variable to study abroad success in dealing with culture shock is communication adaptability and interaction involvement. Since culture shock occurs when common social cues are absent, Chen (1992) investigated how participants cope with stressful situations via relationships with the host culture, communicative adaptability, and amount of interaction in terms of successful adjustment of the participant. Questionnaires from 142 international students studying in the United States

were collected to measure communicative adaptability, interaction involvement, and social difficulties with the host culture (Chen, 1992).

From these surveys, results indicated the more interaction the international students had with the host culture, the easier it was to adapt their communication styles and be more successful in the host environment (Chen, 1992). These strategies helped with coping for the participants in the various levels of culture shock they endured. To continue helping participants to prepare for their experiences, Chen (1992) suggested teaching future participants communication adaptability techniques as well as interaction involvement strategies.

Adaptation is a constant process of change. Change in thoughts, behavior, beliefs, surroundings, and communication are just a few of the variables that are in flux throughout the experience. The adaption process is successful or not, dependent on one's age, experience, cultural differences from the host culture, and ability to adjust to the host culture's communication styles. Identifying the previous research on psychological and sociological adaptation, outlining one of the premiere studies identifying adaptation as an issue of struggle, and noting how communicative adaptability as playing a large role in success of adapting to a new culture can all influence future research in the area of adaptation.

Summary

As a result of identifying culture shock models, how identity influences culture shock, and how adaptation is a constant process, these three themes help to identify the salient facets of culture shock. While culture shock is a different phenomenon than reentry shock, the two processes have similar struggles and difficulties for international

exchange. The culture shock models dating back to the 1950s have progressed as more and more people study abroad and the trend needs to continue with culture shock in reverse. Identity plays a large role in how participants decided to manage the renegotiation of who they are, while the constant process of adaptation pushes and pulls them in various directions as independent correspondences advance. Without outlining culture shock models, identity, and adaptation as one studies abroad, outlining what happens when the traveler comes back would be much more difficult.

Factors Related to Positive and Negative Experience of Culture Shock

There is a plethora of causes for culture shock. Some participants go through an intense process of culture shock, while others successfully integrate within their host cultures almost effortlessly. To describe these reasons of positive and negative factors related to the experience of culture shock, this section outlines individual, interpersonal, organizational, and cultural factors. Individual is defined as the independent elements of a person (such as identity, personality and view of self) that affect culture shock and reentry shock; interpersonal is the factor of intimate relationships with others identified as friends and family; organizational refers to the factors of the company or university that organized the study abroad experience experience; cultural refers to the factors that influence one's behaviors, codes, etiquette and social norms. These themes are prevalent in the literature germane to culture shock. Even though this study is about reentry shock, it is still important to outline the positive and negative aspects of culture shock because the two phenomena are similar. Study abroad participants experience both because both processes are endured by the loss of familiar social cues, stress, and anxiety in adjusting to the new environment while reentry shock is different in that participants expect home

to be exactly the same when returning. While the organizational factor is not part of the final study nor final model, it is still discussed because it is an important factor, but it is beyond the scope of this thesis since pre and post testing is not feasible. Because of this change, the larger focus is on the interpersonal factor.

Individual factor. Throughout a study abroad experience, one's identity is questioned and tested throughout the adaptation process. Cultural identity can cause dissonance when interacting with the host culture, but communication with the host nationals can ease such challenges. This can also hinder adaptation by an increase in stress due to the unfamiliar interactions. In this section, I discuss prominent individual factors that influence culture shock. First, I discuss the study abroad participant's belief of oneself via self-schema and projection of self. Second, I describe how negotiating between individualistic and collectivistic cultures can be trying on one's identity. Third, I outline how the loss of group identification can cause a sense of loss of self, but can also cause an increase of sense of self. Fourth, I describe how social identification is important to one's identity. Finally, I outline how personality influences the mechanisms of how one handles culture shock. These push-pull dimensions encompass the constant inner struggles one goes through (or does not go through) all based on identity throughout the initial stages of culture shock.

One area of struggle in the study abroad process is the view and projection of self. Self-presentation and sense of self can either help or hinder positive adaptation to the host country and positive re-adaptation when returning to the home culture. Spence-Brown (1993) conducted a study of Japanese study abroad students in Australia to determine how communication assisted or detracted from the initial adaptation as well as upon

departure from Australia. This study also measured how competent the students felt in their English language skills and how that was projected to the Australian host families. Spence-Brown (1993) found students were not received well due to the direct, interactive communicative nature of Australia natives in contrast to the withdrawn, quiet communicative nature of the Japan natives as well as the language barrier. The host families reported in a questionnaire that the Japanese students were very reserved, quiet, and very difficult to engage in conversation. The majority of the Japanese students identified in a questionnaire that they felt competent in their English language skills, but the host family data states otherwise. As the experience progressed, more than half of the participants learned to adjust their communication styles more so to be successful communicators in Australia, even though the host families stated it was not up to their standards.

Further, one's cultural identity is another individual factor that helps explain positive and/or negative ramifications from the study abroad process. Sussman (2000) described how in everyday interactions with others that share similar cultural values and cultural identity, these aspects are not acknowledged. Rather, when placed in an environment with others that are culturally dissimilar in identity, identities can be challenged and/or simply identified. For example, persons from individualistic cultures place higher values on the self and independent decisions whereas persons from collectivistic cultures place a high value on family members' input on decisions as well as what is best for the family. A study abroad participant from an individualistic culture may not be aware of this until he or she enters an environment that favors collectivistic decisions and thus, cause dissonance due to the identity differences.

Along with cultural identity is the belief about oneself—a self-schema. A self-schema is very similar to identity, but particularly pertains to what the individual thinks about himself or herself in relation to belonging to groups of society (Sussman, 2000). These groups of society are formed by common religion, gender, ethnicity, economic status, and culture (Sussman, 2000). The self-schema has a large impact on how one handles the study abroad experience. Sussman (2000) stated that as one travels, one's identity and self-schema strengthens. As one travels back to the home culture, one's self-schema with influences from the study abroad experience can create tension between the participant and his/her reactions to coming home.

Social identification is a large component of adaptation. As mentioned in Sussman (2000), identity renegotiation is difficult, challenging, and even depressing for study abroad participants. Participants are constantly being questioned about who they are, what they believe in, what cultural groups they belong in, and what attitudes they have, especially in a new environment with individuals from a different background. Social identification theory describes the importance of belonging in a group in relation to individual identity (Ward et al., 2001).

The loss of familiar behaviors, values, and traditions in a new environment is a cause of confusion, loss of confidence in identity, and loneliness. "Identification is also seen as including a sense of affirmation, pride and a positive evaluation of one's group, as well as an involvement dimension, relating to ethnocultural behaviors, values, and traditions" (Ward et al., 2001, as quoted in Phinney, 1992). For example, if the study abroad participant is accustomed to playing in a softball league on the weekends and no

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longer is a part of one while studying abroad, the participant will feel a sense of loss in his or her identity since he or she no longer participates in a team.

Renegotiating social identity can be difficult, and personality can help or hinder that adjustment. Personality has a large influence on adaptation. Swagler and Jome (2005) utilized the Five-Factor Inventory Model of Personality to measure the five different personality domains: neuroticism, extraversion, openness to experience, agreeableness, and conscientiousness. Swagler and Jome (2005) hypothesized greater difficulty adjusting with higher levels of neuroticism, based on the previous literature on personality traits. The study was based on North American travelers living in Taiwan fulfilling various purposes. "North American travelers with lower neuroticism, more agreeableness, and more conscientiousness traits, and who were more acculturated to Taiwanese culture, fared better in their psychological adjustment to Taiwan" (Swagler & Jome, 2005, p. 532). These personality traits could also assist in the transition into returning home as well. Although this study was culture specific in studying North Americans in Taiwan, it provides for a foundation of how personality traits assist in the acculturation process, which could provide an introduction to understanding how personality affects the reentry process.

Individually, there are many push-pull factors that can be attributed to positive or negative culture shock. Generally speaking, study abroad participants go through some sort of identity renegotiation because of the loss of a familiar social environment. Being placed in an environment that one is not accustomed to, one's identity is challenged through the study abroad participant's own view of him or herself as well as how others in the host environment interpret the individual. This is a critical piece of studying

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reentry shock because coming back into the home environment requires another process of identity renegotiation, view and projection of self, self-schema, and social identification, similarly to what participants endured during the culture shock process.

Interpersonal and organizational factors. When interacting with individuals from the host country, there are norms, codes, rules, and behaviors that may be different from what one is used to. The lack of those familiar social cues causes culture shock, as described in the previous section on culture shock models. Through predeparture preparation, communication, social network and organizational support, study abroad participants are able to withstand the positive and negative factors related to culture shock. This section outlines nonverbal communication, rules and conventions of interaction, social support, social networks, and how organizations can help (or hinder) these aforementioned elements. These two factors are combined in this section because the organizational factor is important to discuss, but it is not part of the final study. Rather, the interpersonal factor takes more of a main stage since it is more informative of the final model. Identifying the support received before and during the study abroad experience can better predict the support received when the participant comes back, so it is necessary to outline these factors to better outline those related to reentry shock.

Nonverbal communication, body language, eye contact and gaze, gestures, all impact culture shock. Upon meeting someone, first impressions generally include body language. These types of actions are learned culturally and are not necessarily universal. Nonverbal communication is a large aspect of the interpersonal realm of culture shock. Adapting to new social cues, bodily proximity, gestures, and even eye gaze can be difficult. Bodily touch varies across cultures and can be a cause for grave

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miscommunication and misunderstanding. The varying levels of eye contact and the

amount of time that gaze is held varies across cultures and can send the message of

dishonesty or untrustworthiness (Ward et al., 2001). Gestures are another nonverbal that

can be misconstrued. In Greek cultures, a wave can mean a curse on the entire family,

whereas the wave is a common greeting in Western cultures.

Rules and conventions of social conduct differ among various cultures and

learning them anew can be difficult for study abroad participants. Punctuality, conduct,

social rules, and forms of address "tend to operate below the level of consciousness"

(Ward et al., 2001, p. 59). Rules and conventions are innate in a culture and most study

abroad participants do not learn them unless they are broken. "In an intercultural

encounter the greater the difference that exists in the respective, culturally determined

communication patterns of the participants, the more difficulty they will have in

establishing a mutually satisfying relationship" (Ward et al., 2001, p. 69). Learning these

communication patterns can be one of the most difficult barriers to cross in terms of

culture shock.

Communication plays a large, positive role in the study abroad participant

adaptation process. This is part of the interpersonal factors because the emphasis is on

the interaction amongst individuals as helpful in coping with stresses of culture shock.

Pitts (2006) investigated U.S. Americans in France and how they used communication to

deal with their struggles. She found that everyday talk with other participants was a vital

part of the adaptation process through interviewing, journaling, and participant

observation. Interaction amongst the participants allowed for common ground to be

shared, similar experiences dissected, and advice given to other students to help them

through their everyday struggles. This was also a recurrent theme when the participants

returned home from France in assisting with their transition back into life in their home

countries. Emails and instant messages were sent in support of one another as they

exchanged similar stories of transitioning back home (Pitts, 2006). Communication is a

key role in successful adaptation.

Everyday stresses can be combated through everyday talk via social support

networks (Pitts, 2006; Lin, 2006). Lin (2006) pointed out the gap in the research about

cross-cultural adaptation and culture shock and its lack of acknowledging social support

as a way of alleviating the stressors of culture shock. In attempt to fill that gap, Lin

investigated what types of social support a Chinese support group on campus can provide

for individuals adjusting to life in the United States. Through participant observation,

interviews, and focus groups, Lin discovered everyday stresses were put at ease through a

Chinese organization via informational, emotional, tangible, and intellectual support. A

website was provided to answer frequently asked questions, letters of support were

mailed to the Chinese students, volunteers offered to show new students around, and

provided an online subscription to a Chinese magazine (Lin, 2006).

In order to cope with learning new social codes, social support is a factor that

helps the stress of culture shock that accompany the new learning of social codes. The

lack of social support in cross-cultural transitions makes the study abroad participants

more susceptible to physical and mental illness (Ward et al., 2001). Social support comes

from family members, friends, significant others, and acquaintances. Married couples

separated by an international exchange will feel the strain due to the participant's stresses

because of the new cultural surroundings and pulls on the relationship can occur (Ward et

al., 2001). In terms of friendships, relationships with other co-nationals on the experience can either help or hurt the participant's experience. While the common ground can provide an outlet for stress relief and battle loneliness, it can also seriously impede on the participant's adaptation and cultural learning. A balance of host national friends and co-national friends throughout the study abroad experience assists in adaptation (Ward et al., 2001).

One form of social support to manage culture shock is through social networks connecting students through international student organizations. Constantine, Andersen, Berkel, Caldwell, and Utsey (2005) investigated adaptation concerns of individuals from Ghana, Kenya, and Nigeria to see what struggles these international students go through and what can be done to improve campus resources for them. What they found when reporting about their families is the majority of them maintained a strong bond with their families back in Africa. They also have solid friendships in the United States, usually with other friends that are from their same countries in Africa. "Participants typically reported that they sought social support from both family members and friends to cope with problems related to adjusting to U.S. culture" (Constantine, Anderson, Berkel, Caldwell, & Utsey, p. 62, 2005), so one of their main coping strategies was to lean on their social support network. Communication is what connects the participants to their social network and would be impossible without it.

In terms of culture shock and organizational factors, there is a gap in the literature describing how organizations can help or hinder the stresses of culture shock. Even though there is not empirical evidence to support whether organizational support increases or decreases culture shock, organizations most certainly have an impact on a

study abroad participant's level of culture shock. If the participant is not debriefed on culture shock through his or her organizational arrangement, the lack of communication on such a transition can be detrimental. To fill this gap, one study with one organization involving pre and post testing as well as throughout the experience could help inform how an organization plays a role in culture and reentry shock.

Overall, communication plays a large role in facilitating and hindering interpersonal communication during a study abroad experience. Everyday talk allows for participants to share their feelings and thoughts with others in the same experience. Interacting with host nationals allows participants learn the various social codes, behaviors, and language relevant to the host country. Maintaining contact back home with friends and family alleviates the stresses of adjustment, while creating and maintaining contact with host nationals reinforces their adjustment as well. Communication is what enacts social support to lessen stress and allow for a more positive experience. Through support networks and education on culture shock through organizations such as universities, the ramifications of culture shock can be alleviated. Through summarizing interpersonal factors and identifying the lack of evidence on organizational factors related to culture shock, modeling the factors related to the severity of reentry shock can be better understood.

Cultural factors. While traveling, one must keep in mind that cultural differences exist, regardless of cultural proximity or distance. Similarities may exist between cultures, but a study abroad participant should be prepared for expectations of behavior. Interaction style, amount of self-disclosure, conflict style, space, forms of address, and greetings are just a few components that are culture specific that help to

explain the effects of culture shock. This must be kept in mind while returning home as well because the social cues learned in the host environment may not necessarily be the same when returning home. The following section outlines self-disclosure etiquette, individualistic and collectivistic conflict styles, culture specific language, and social interaction. In learning these variables in a host environment, communication is the bridge that gaps the knowledge base for the study abroad participant.

To determine the amount of differences that will exist within the host culture, the participant should prepare by determining if the host culture expects a large amount of dialogue right away or the opposite (Ward et al., 2001). An overload of self-disclosure or lack thereof can be detrimental in initial interactions and damage future communication. Etiquette can also make or break impressions of the study abroad participant to the host culture. Ward et al. (2001) discussed how citizens of Asian countries rarely use the word 'no' so the word 'yes' can be interpreted as 'maybe' or 'no', depending on the context. Saying 'thank you' is not always stated out loud, but rather nonverbally, making it easy for individuals used to the verbal recognition to be confused or even upset with the gesture (Ward et al., 2001).

These types of interactions could lead to conflict and not knowing how to resolve conflict in another context is another stressor of culture shock. The level of individualism or collectivism (individual versus group needs taking precedence) (Ward et al., 2001) of the host culture is one factor influencing how conflict should be handled and resolved (Ward et al., 2001). Ward et al. (2001) stated, "in collectivist countries formal rules and procedures were given more importance" (p. 56), whereas individual decision-making is valued in individualistic cultures. Negotiating conflict in collectivistic cultures

tend to take a collaborative approach while individualistic cultures tend to adopt a style that is the best for the individual person (Ward et al., 2001).

Increased contact with host nationals eases transitional stresses as well, even though it can increase stress initially (Barna, 1983). This allows for the participant to pick up on nonverbal cues, rules, conventions, and social norms earlier on in the experience in order to avoid social faux pas as the experience progresses. Solely learning the language in a classroom prior to the study abroad experience is not always enough training and since languages evolve almost daily, it is almost impossible to know all the different meanings of words. For example, the word chick has very different connotative and denotative meanings in the English language. Without interacting in an environment where that word is used connotatively, it would be difficult for the participant to know the double meaning before encountering them in a social context of the host environment.

To combat the effects of culture shock, social interaction with the host culture is one strategy to learn about the host culture. The most common unsuccessful interactions occur when individuals are unaware of the typical verbal and nonverbal behaviors and do not realize that until something goes wrong (Ward et al., 2001). Knowing how one's behaviors affect others and how to adapt that behavior to various situations is crucial to alleviating the stresses of culture shock. Proxemics, revealing emotions, greetings, self-disclosure, etiquette, dealing with conflict, nonverbals, forms of address, and other such social skills are salient aspects of the behaviors that affect interactions (Ward et al., 2001).

Not knowing even a basic level of the culture of the host country can start a study abroad experience off on the wrong track. First impressions are crucial, especially when

entering an unfamiliar environment. Interacting with the individuals from the host

country and accessing a base level of knowledge about the host culture provides for a

more positive experience. It is crucial to have a base knowledge of the host culture in

order to understand the etiquette, how to handle conflict, and how to interact with host

nationals successfully. Discerning what these factors are in the culture shock process can

help in alleviating these same stresses that affect the transition back into the home

culture.

This section outlined the factors related to positive and negative culture shock

throughout a study abroad experience and briefly described how these sections are related

to reentry shock and the overall goals of this study. By identifying what is salient to the

number of elements of culture shock and the beginning process of a study abroad

participant's experience, the elements salient to reentry shock are identified in

comparison. The following section outlines factors related to positive and negative

experience of reentry shock.

Factors Related to Positive and Negative Experience of Reentry Shock

Once the study abroad participant adapts to the new environment, overcomes the

rollercoaster of culture shock, and fulfills the purpose he or she studied abroad for, the

participant goes through similar struggles and difficulties when returning home.

Personality traits, tastes, likes, and dislikes have changed, relationships are expected to be

the same but may not be, support from the organization that facilitated the experience

may or may not be there, and changes in society continue to evolve while the study

abroad participant was away. This section is organized in similar fashion of the previous

section by first describing individual, second, interpersonal, third, organizational, and

fourth, cultural factors. While the organizational factor is ultimately not included in the current study because testing this factor is beyond the study's scope, it is still important to discuss and is included. These factors help to explain why the positive and negative shocks of returning home exist. After explaining these factors, hypotheses, research questions, the conceptual and methods of research will be outlined.

Individual factors. Past and present research investigated how personality, attitude, view of self, and communication style affect adaptation. These areas have been researched in attempt to understand the individual struggles one encounters when returning home from a study abroad experience. Since these are considered innate characteristics of a person, one would presume that a study abroad experience should not change the participant too drastically, but some of the literature suggests otherwise. Through outlining these factors related to readjustment and reentry shock, a model can cohesively piece these factors together to better explain this phenomenon. The following section outlines emotions, personality, identity and communication style as the most important individual elements for reentry shock.

Some individual factors that affect the reentry process are emotions and uneasy feelings. Similarly to culture shock filled with the U- and W-curves of emotions, reentry shock may often times be more difficult. Ramsey and Schaetti (1999) described the reentry process as full of "sadness, excitement, and trepidation" and these emotions may offer comfort by returning to what is most familiar and comfortable—or so the study abroad participant thinks. "Both experience and research has taught those of us who work in the field that reentry into one's culture of origin is more stressful with more unexpected consequences than a transition into the unfamiliar" (Ramsey & Schaetti,

1999). This is because study abroad participants have an expectation that the environment that was once familiar will be exactly the same as it is remembered. This can be quite detrimental to the readaptation process because very rarely do relationships, work, view on life, and the feeling of being relaxed in the home environment remain exactly as one remembers them (Ramsey & Schaetti, 1999). While such things will rarely change a drastic amount, minor changes can cause anger, anxiety, depression, and other physical and mental ailments. Typically, it takes (on average) about six months for the participant to fully adjust back to life in the home country.

Individual expectations of similarity when reentering the home environment can be harmful to readaptation. Spence-Brown's (1993) study outlined in the previous section on individual factors related to culture shock helps to identify barriers to successful reentry. Her study investigated how two cultures (Australia and Japan) had different assumptions on the amount of communication expected from the other party. The Japanese participants thought they spoke enough to their Australian host families and spoke English well, while the results of the study stated otherwise. Even though the Japanese participants stated they changed their communicative behaviors from the Japanese standards, it still was not enough to fulfill the basis of Australian standards. This can also show how presentation of self can skew one's experience. When one reenters the home culture, he or she may think that things are going to be the same as they were before, relationships will be just as great as they were before, and everything is going to be just fine. In the case of the Japanese students that adjusted their communication styles to the social norms of Australia may encounter some troubles in their home country of Japan. These significant differences in communicating that once

caused mishaps in the beginning of their study abroad experience may now be forgotten and familiar friends, family, colleagues, and acquaintances could be offended by the changes and differences in behavior.

A study abroad experience allows for a great deal of independence since most are fulfilled through school, work, and volunteering—one may not know other participants that are embarking on the same journey, and forces the participant to rely on him or herself. Independence is part of one's mental character and affects individual readaptation. This independence can be quite gratifying, but also very challenging. To endure the ups and downs of culture shock outlined in the previous section, one has to maintain a strong mental character not only during the study abroad experience but also during the process of returning home. Warren and Patten (1981) outlined the difficulties of returning home after volunteering for the Peace Corps in Ghana, Africa. Since the experience drastically changed Patten, she found it difficult to be the same person that family and friends once knew of her. The fast-paced life and obsession with consumerism in the United States was overwhelming and difficult to deal with, even as years passed. One of the most overwhelming experiences Patten (Warren & Patten, 1981) experienced was the grocery store. Shopping for food in Ghana was more of an opportunity to build interpersonal relationships as opposed to the U.S. American grocery store experience to purchase food and only to purchase food. After spending a year shopping for one person in the markets of Ghana, Patten then had to re-adjust to shopping for a family of four, including her children and husband upon returning to the United States. Not only was she terrified of the cold, impersonal experience of grocery shopping

in the United States, but was also overwhelmed with anxiety by the choices in the U.S. American grocery store.

Smith (2001) noted the importance of identity in the reentry process. Since returnees often feel like strangers in their home cultures upon return, their identities essentially are being renegotiated and the individuals are once again navigating what may seem like uncharted territory. Smith (2001) discussed this renegotiation as a positive transitional period that allows the individual to grow individually and in an exponential manner socially, professionally, spiritually, etc. to manifest the study abroad experience into his or her life. This allows for the participant to incorporate the international experience into everyday life.

Further, Smith (2001) recognized the impact of communication competency of the individual on his or her readaptation. Smith (2001) argued that communication competence is what disseminates these cultural identities and intercultural communication competence is a vital tool for study abroad participants when returning home in interacting with various peoples that also belong to these cultural identities as well as the new intercultural identity that has emerged from the experience. "Communication is central to the successful negotiation of a person's new [inter]cultural identity during reentry" (Smith, 2001, p. 13) and without it, difficulties may arise in the renegotiation process.

Personality is another factor that provides insight to the positive and negative effects due to reentry shock and the reentry process after a study abroad experience. Gaw (2000) conducted a study to investigate how personality affected decisions to seek counseling in dealing with reentry shock issues. Shyness concerns were ranked among

the highest in participants that reported a high level of reverse culture shock in the Reverse Shock Scale and the Personal Problems Inventory. These shyness concerns affected speech anxiety, which resulted in weak interpersonal relationships. The severity of reverse culture shock was not, however, related to the willingness of the individual to seek counseling and other services upon return.

Along with personality, feelings, and emotions, one's attitude plays a significant role in individual factors affecting the reentry process. Attitude is what influences the participant when entering the new culture as well as returning home. Pawenteh (2000) described the preconceived notions that each individual has about various cultures around the world and how these notions impact first impressions of the initial culture shock. Since one grows up with such notions, it is difficult to look at another culture without them in making sense of the new environment, whether it is initially in the culture shock stages or during the reentry shock stages.

Identity renegotiation is a challenge when one returns home. Sussman (2000) recognized the hardships of identity change upon returning to the home culture. "For many repatriates, they no longer find a fit between their newly formed cultural identity and that of their home culture environment" (Sussman, 2000, p. 365). The reintroduction of the home environment causes the study abroad participant to reassess his or her values, beliefs, behaviors, and cognitive maps and compares them to norms of the home culture, typically causing a negative reaction. This reaction occurs because what was once normal for the cultural group the study abroad participant was a part of is no longer and the participant feels outside of home culture's group (Sussman, 2000).

Communication style is another predictor of positive/negative outcomes of the reentry process and reentry shock. "The more participants rely on the social skills used in the host cultures, the better their adjustment" (Oguri & Gudykunst, 2002, p. 582). This goes both in the initial adaptation stages of entering the host culture and the process of returning home. Since study abroad experiences typically are for a longer period of time with intentions to return home, it is possible that the participants need to readjust their communication styles when returning home as well, especially if the experience was in a place that was significantly different from the home culture.

Adjusting one's communication style to the host country assists in the reentry process as well. In Oguri and Gudykunst's (2002) study, they found that the participants from Asian countries studying in the U.S. that had the most success in adjusting socioculturally and psychologically were the ones that were able to adjust their communication styles to fit the U.S.' style. This was measured through various communication scales, with direct communication and interpretation of silence ranking the highest among successful participants. The more individuals are able to do this when returning home, the more successful the transition into the reentry process will be.

Returning home from a study abroad experience can be compared to the push-pull process mentioned in the individual section of positive and negative factors related culture shock, but much more intensely. The reentry process is far more difficult than going abroad and the participant endures far more cognitive dissonance because of the expectation of familiarity. One's identity shaped and formed before the experience is renegotiated abroad and is once again challenged when interacting with previously established relational partners. Communication and discussing those changes is vital to

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understanding and coping with said changes, but communication style, attitude, and personality can hinder that growth. Even though each participant may or may not encounter these push-pull factors of reentry shock, it is still important to educate them on these issues that may occur. Summarizing them in a cohesive model is the first step in doing so, along with emphasizing communication as a key role in navigating the reentry shock process.

      Interpersonal factors. Interpersonal support networks are of utmost importance, especially during times of change and transition. Interacting with that support network is one of the key facets in understanding, coping, and utilizing the experience in the study abroad participant's life. Once the participant returns, (s)he is in need of interaction to make sense of what (s)he is going through, especially since the participant typically expects the home environment to be the same. Family members, friends, siblings, and close individuals expect the participant to be as (s)he was before the study abroad experience, so both interactional partners need to engage in conversation to understand the changes. This section outlines the need for social support through a strong social network and the need for happy and healthy communication through that network to discuss and understand the experience.

      Social support is one of the most important factors in dealing with the difficulties of life. The stronger the support system, the easier it is to get through tough trauma, especially when dealing with reentry shock (Martin, 1986). Communication plays a large role in facilitating the ease into returning home. "From a communication perspective, the way in which the returnee understands and interprets changes stemming from the intercultural experience is the essence of "reentry"" (Martin, 1986, p. 184).

Social support is an essential piece of successful adjustment and also an important factor in the reentry process. Davis and Chapman (2007) discussed the importance of social support in a successful reentry into the home culture. Japanese student participants were interviewed about their experiences abroad as well as about their return home. Results indicated that the stronger the bond with the family at home in Japan and the stronger the social support network in the United States, the less of a 'blow' it was returning home once again. Although the majority of the Japanese student participants did encounter some affects of reentry shock, it was not as difficult with communication amongst the social support network and the participants.

The happier and healthier the communication, the more successful the reentry process after the study abroad experience. "The more the returnees were dissatisfied with relationships with family, friends, and professors, the greater reentry problems they experienced" (Martin, 1986, p. 184, as quoted by Uehara, 1986). Martin (1986) surveyed 173 study abroad participants after they had gone through the honeymoon stage of reentry. Martin found that various types of relationships had different forms of communication and not all communication changed. Family communication typically remained the same, while interaction with friends was more complex and different.

The need for communication is quite substantial when the participant returns home. Seiter and Waddell (1989) described participants' interpersonal needs for communication to promote a successful readaptation into the home culture. Seiter and Waddell (1989) measured for three areas of basic interpersonal needs (inclusion, control, and affection) that are fulfilled through communication, through an instrument developed by Schutz (1966). Fifty-four participants completed the questionnaire, with results

indicating reentry shock is associated with relational satisfaction and with the use of communication for pleasure and affection. The purpose of Seiter & Waddell's study was to examine if constructs were related to reentry shock and found improved interpersonal skills, but decreased relational satisfaction in correlation with more severe reentry shock.

While the participants readjust back to their home life in the United States, the need for communication is high. Not only is interaction necessary for the participants, it is imperative for the various members in their social support networks. Even though communication is a significant aspect of understanding the experience, it is not inevitable that it will take place. Participants need a strong sense of support from their social networks, even though it may not be obvious since the experience is typically viewed as a positive one. Describing and presenting a model to show what changes may or may not happen can open pathways of necessary communication between the participants and social network.

Organizational factors. Another vital part of a successful readaptation into the home environment is education. Courses, reorientation seminars, training and support through the organization one studies abroad through can provide ample assistance while the participant readjusts to his or her home once again. To start off these educational venues, a model displaying and describing the struggles and triumphs he or she may or may not go through can open up avenues of communication. This section discusses the need for reorientation seminars, intercultural competency training and education about this topic. While the organizational factor is not included in the final model or discussion due to its complex nature and difficulty to track, it is important to discuss since it plays a large role in study abroad.

Courses teaching individuals about what to expect are important components for participants to learn about what to expect when returning. Koester (1984) discussed the need for a course that involves intercultural communication and the reentry process. She argued since so many students are pursuing education outside of U.S. borders, it is necessary to have a course to deliberate what one goes through when returning home from a study abroad experience. Learning strategies to cope with renegotiating oneself in the home environment is essential in dealing with the struggles of reentry shock, and a course describing these challenges would allow for student participants to understand what they are going through. La Brack (1985) agreed with the adoption of reorientation seminars and courses for students to prepare for what they will encounter with the intercultural experience because students are not always prepared and because of that, they do not make the most of the experience. Martin (1989) also discussed the importance of a course to allow for students to integrate their international experiences into their campus learning and life.

Along with courses, training, intercultural communicative competency, and reentry seminars are at a peak of high interest in education, professional, and vocational ventures (Grove & Torbiörn, 1993; Brislin, 1993; La Brack, 1993; Martin, 1993, Szkudlarek, 2010). Grove and Torbiörn (1993) discussed the importance of intercultural training during the study abroad experience in order for the participant to adjust properly along with Brislin (1993) suggested using his culture general simulator in order for students to understand and make the most of their experience to integrate it into their everyday lives. La Brack (1993) and Martin (1993) on the other hand discussed the importance of training and education for the participant once he or she returns in order to

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deal with feelings of anxiety, uncertainty and how communication plays an integral role. Some universities already have reentry training included in their study abroad programs, but it is not consistent (Szkudlarek, 2010).

Reentry training is something that needs to be consistent with organizations and companies that provide studying abroad services. Lerstrom (1995) further expanded on the need for reentry training and assembled a reentry workshop for Luther College students. The workshop lasted four sessions ranging 1.5-2 hours each. Session one was to discuss favorite memories and to rank the top ten challenges the study abroad participants faced when returning home. Session two promoted adapting the participants' ways of thinking to integrate the international experience into understanding others' points of view. Session three was about the participants and how they felt about their home cultures now and session four charted the participants' growth throughout the experience as well as through the workshop.

La Brack and Pusch (2001) expanded even further from Lerstrom's (1995) guidelines for putting together a reentry workshop by creating a list of helpful tips for parents when their study abroad participant returns home. La Brack and Pusch (2001) suggested to be accepting that reentry shock does happen and it can be very stressful to the participant. The participant may seem like a stranger when he or she first returns home and to not have high expectations of the old relationships and to allow time, space and a venue for the participant to adjust and discuss their experiences. Be aware of what has changed in society as well as in friend and family relationships—avoid mockery of new patterns of behavior or speech. It is also important to encourage the participant to maintain contacts in the host culture in order to avoid regret in not maintaining contact.

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Not only do universities note the importance of reentry training, but work organizations do as well. Newton, Hutchings, and Kabanoff (2007) found that organizations noted the importance of reorientation training in organizations for returning employees, but very few organizations employ a reentry training program. Human resource managers in Australia were surveyed to analyze how they value international exchange and to avoid high turnover of resigning expatriates. Responses indicated that human resource managers ranked two and three years as the typical abroad assignment and would like to incorporate reorientation programs to offer better support psychologically, socially and emotionally for their employees.

Throughout education, the training seminars, the courses, and reorientation programs, communication is the main subject in teaching participants about the reentry process. Since there is a great amount of prefacing on culture shock before the experience takes place, it is imperative to address reentry shock in just as much detail, if not more, when the participant returns. With these reorientation programs, presenting a model at the beginning of these sessions or classes to open up the conversation about reentry shock. The session or classes can delve into more depth about the various elements of the model, and then return to it at the end of the session so the participants can see the overall picture of the reentry process along with an open venue to discuss experiences, challenges, and the like.

Cultural factors. One of the most difficult challenges a participant has is to readapt to the social norms, codes, behaviors, and even language back in the home environment. Every culture has its own slang and terminology, even when the cultures are very similar to one another, so even the slightest differences can pose difficulties in

returning home. Since every participant does not go through the same struggles with switching back to the home culture, a cohesive model describing what participants may or may not go through can prepare them to better understand the experience. This section discusses social norms and codes, amount of prior intercultural interaction, characteristics of the host culture, and cultural distance.

Each culture has social norms and codes that are employed to communicate with one another. Social norms and conduct are disseminated through symbols, codes, and messages to describe how the norms and codes work (Brein & David, 1971). When a participant is first becoming accustomed with the new culture and new people, he or she may find it difficult to pick up on those subtle social cues. Returning home may be no different, especially after a longer study abroad experience, where social cues that were once innate may be difficult to pick up on again. In Brein and David's (1971) study on abroad adjustment, social constructs while in the initial culture shock stage can impede on the success of the experience.

Another societal factor pertaining to the process of returning home relates to the amount of intercultural interaction one has had prior to the experience as well as during. "Participants with a great deal of previous intercultural experience will, in general, experience less stress in the new culture" (Paige, 1993, p. 9). This is because individuals that have been exposed to a variety of different cultures and is familiar with the cross-cultural adjustment process, has competency interacting with those that are culturally dissimilar, and have better understanding of his or her own culture and values. An individual from a homogenous country or culture will struggle more due to the fact that

he or she has only been exposed to other peoples that are culturally similar, with similar self-schemas and identities.

Characteristics of the host culture that linger with the participant that are not socially acceptable within the home culture can affect readaptation. Hess and Callahan (2005) interviewed 29 Peace Corps volunteers about their reentry processes and found that some volunteers acted in manners without knowing. For example, one volunteer who spent time in Samoa almost physically slapped a child during Christmas festivities because that was the norm in Samoa. This is not a norm in the United States and would cause embarrassment (if not worse) at the family gathering. Other Peace Corps volunteers found difficulty "not to wear open toe shoes and I still try to drive on the left side of the road on some small unmarked back roads" (Hess & Callahan, 2005, p. 11). These types of actions made readaptation tough. Others found it hard to express themselves with slang in English, and social rituals such as dating were "rusty" (Hess & Callahan, 2005). Missing certain foods and customs from the host culture were ranked as positive lapses in the reentry process.

Even though these characteristics of adjustment may seem trivial (such as forms of dress, etiquette, and social behaviors), they can be detrimental to the individual during times of transition, especially during reentry. Previous experience abroad may or may not assist the individual. It appears as though the more different the cultural values from the home environment to the host, it appears the more onerous the transition home for the participant, regardless of previous experience, amount of exposure with host nationals, and various societal rules. Showing the differences amongst cultural factors in a model

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to participants would help in the understanding of some struggles they may face when returning home.

Cultural distance is one of the biggest predictors for the level of reentry shock. Cultural distance refers to the amount of similarity/dissimilarity between the study abroad participant's home culture and the host culture (Mumford, 2000). The larger the cultural distance, the more severe the shock will be readapting to the home culture. The results from a cultural shock and cultural distance questionnaire showed that 487 high school graduates from Britain volunteering abroad had difficulties adapting to their volunteer environment. Volunteers in countries such as India, Pakistan and Nepal had a more difficult time adjusting initially to the new environment than volunteers in Australia, New Zealand and the United States. Since these individuals struggled with adjusting to their new environments, it would be logical to hypothesize adjusting back to Britain would be just as difficult (if not more).

Although there is a lot of information about reentry shock, there still is a lack of literature about this topic area, specifically relevant to U.S. American students. This area is very broad and not all studies have produced the same results in terms of the severity and changes one goes through when going home. Warren and Patten (1981) noted this lack in the research and found the reentry process to be more stressful than the initial culture shock and adjustment period. Others have noted this stage of the study abroad experience was seen to be the most stressful as well (Brein & David, 1971; La Brack, 1993; Sussman, 2000; Christofi & Thompson, 2007), and there is a need for future research. Kim (2005) and Szkudlarek (2010) both explained the disconnectedness and segmentation among the studies in reentry and note the difficulty for current researchers

to develop studies in this area. In attempt to make more connectedness and to advance

this neglected area of research, I propose a conceptual model of the reentry process to test

several hypotheses and research questions.

Conceptual Model and Description

Figure 1

Reentry Shock Model
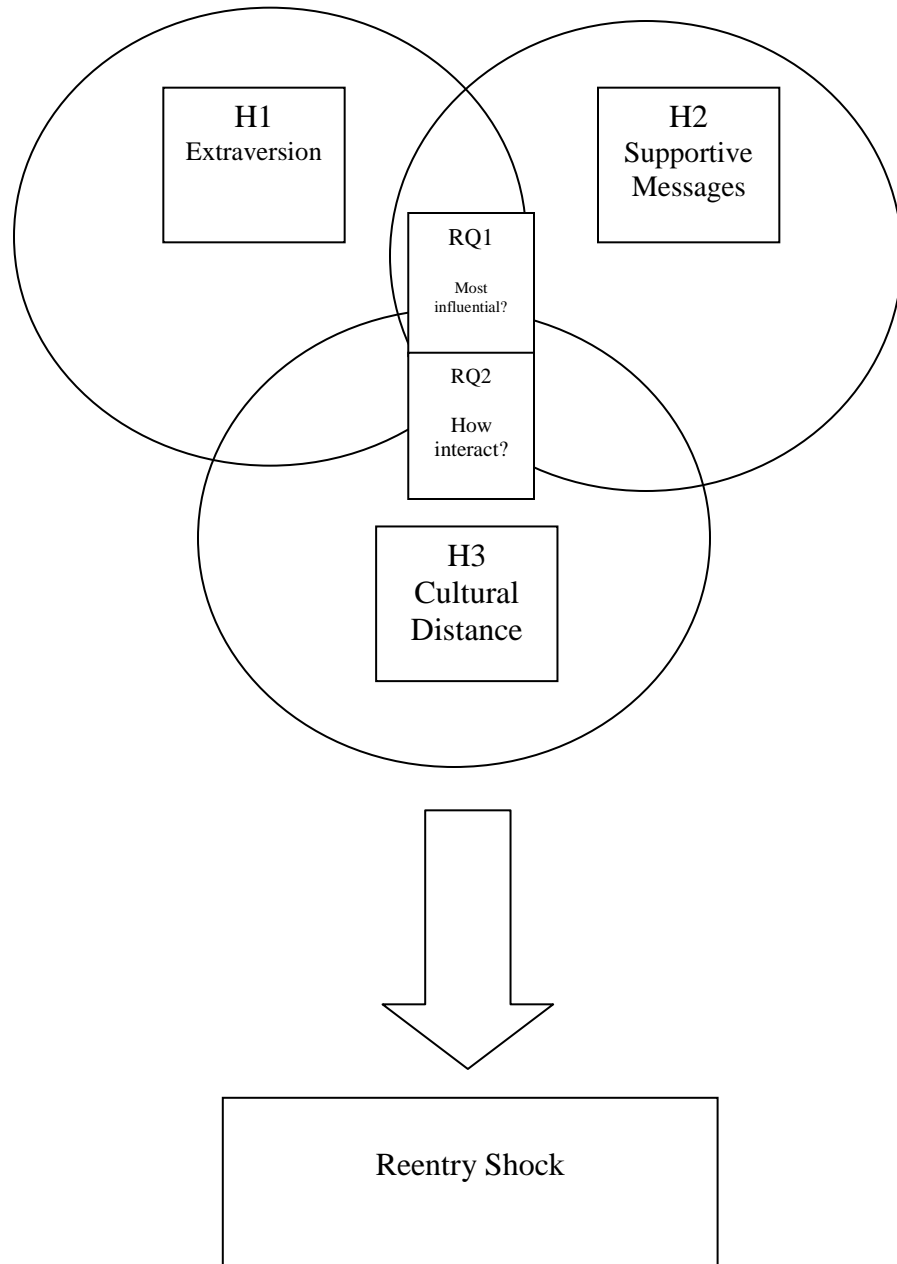
The conceptual model shows that all of these factors are intertwined and influence one another in some shape or form by the circles overlapping one another. The hypotheses represent the variables that are most important from the literature review and arguments presented from what was gathered from the literature. The hypotheses were generated from themes that were most prominent in the literature and I chose one variable at each factor level. No one has looked at these variables in conjunction and there are too many variables to include all possibilities of what may explain the severity of reentry shock. Ultimately, I argue that reentry shock is a communicative phenomenon instead of an emotional state as previously studied (e.g., Oberg, 1960; Gullahorn & Gullahorn, 1966; Church, 1982; Gaw, 2000; Constantine et al., 2005). Instead, I argue that the more the study abroad participant interacts with others, the less severe the level of reentry shock. The more the study abroad participant does not discuss his or her experiences or what (s)he is going through when returning, the more (s)he will struggle with adjusting back to living in the United States again. The level of reentry shock is dependent on how the study abroad participant interacts with others when returning from their study abroad experience.

The middle boxes represent the research questions of what factor is most important and how the factors interact and influence one another. Since these three themes were prevalent throughout the literature, it was logical to generate three hypotheses, but yet it is still unknown as to what factor is most influential and how these factors connect with one another.

At the individual level, I hypothesized about study abroad participants' level of extraversion because the literature discussed identities as in a state of flux and

renegotiation during study abroad (Sussman, 2000; Smith, 2001). Gaw (2000) noted shyness is the highest concern of study abroad participants when returning home and Oguri and Gudykunst (2002) described high interaction with host nationals helped study abroad students to readjust when returning home to the United States because they were able to interact with others to feel at ease. Thus, I hypothesized the more extraverted the study abroad participant is, the less severe the reentry shock (s)he will endure. Extraversion is a good communication variable because extraversion is primarily about willingness to communicate. The more extraverted you are, the more willing you are to communicate.

At the interpersonal level, I hypothesized about social support networks since it was a prominent theme in the literature. The literature stated the stronger the support system and the higher amount of interaction with the support network, the easier it is to deal with struggles of adjusting back to the home environment (Martin, 1986). The need for communication between the study abroad participant and his or her close relationships (such as friends and family members) is high (Seiter & Waddell, 1981; Davis & Chapman, 2007). Higher interaction will result in less reentry shock. Specifically, I hypothesized that the more positively supportive the social network is, the less severe the reentry shock the study abroad participant endures.

Although the organizational level is important, it is beyond the time frame allowed for this study. Since most of the literature elaborated on the need for training courses, programs and seminars, (Koester, 1984; La Brack, 1985; Martin, 1989; Brislin, 1993; Lerstrom, 1995) there is not empirical evidence of the effectiveness of such programs. To inquire about such a program or training as influential to a study abroad

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participant's level of reentry shock, there would need to be pre-tests and post-tests, all of which are too complicated for this particular study and would be best as a separate study in the future.

At the cultural level, I hypothesized about cultural distance because it is the variable that encompasses the other variables I outlined. Social norms and codes, the amount of prior intercultural interaction, and characteristics of the host culture are all predictors of how similar or dissimilar the host culture is to the study abroad participants' home culture. These elements are how one is socialized to interact with others and thus, may serve as predictors of reentry shock since I argue communication serves as a vehicle for positive readjustment. I hypothesized that the more culturally distant the host culture is from the home culture of the study abroad participant, the more severe the reentry shock.

Hypotheses and Research Questions

From this description of the conceptual model and the arguments created throughout this chapter, I proposed three hypotheses and two research questions relevant to the three factors of this study (individual, interpersonal, cultural):

H1: The more extraverted the study abroad participant is, the less severe the reentry shock the study abroad participant experiences.

H2: The more supportive interaction the study abroad participant receives from his or her social support network, the less severe the reentry shock.

H3: The more culturally distant the study abroad country from the host country, the more intense the reentry shock.

RQ1: What factor(s) is (are) most influential on the severity of reentry shock?

RQ2: Do the factors have interaction effects on their impact on reentry shock?

Chapter 3: Methods

The methods utilized in this study are a two-component process. This process allows for the creation of a measure (component one) in order to test the conceptual model (component two) proposed about the severity of reentry shock in study abroad students. The first component involved gathering qualitative data from previous study abroad students via open-ended surveys on Survey Monkey. This component was necessary to gather responses in order to construct a new measure by creating indicators from their responses. The second step of the first component was constructing the new measure, with indicators generated from the qualitative data from the open-ended surveys on reentry shock. This measure was then distributed to a large snowball sample to previous study abroad participants from all over the United States in order to meet the requirements of confirmatory factor analysis for parts of component two. The second component included testing the proposed conceptual model utilizing a form of structural equation modeling, multiple regression and hierarchical multiple regression, which was based on previous literature with the quantitative data produced from the surveys. The University of New Mexico's Institutional Review Board approved this study.

Rationale for Methods

Since it is nearly impossible to follow study abroad participants around and observe their behavior after they have returned from their study abroad experience, a key method for measuring reentry shock is recollection of participants. As with any method utilized in empirical research, there are strengths and weaknesses. First, survey research is the most appropriate method to collect data given the hypotheses and research questions. I am interested in finding out what is the most important factor of reentry

adjustment and how the various factors interact with one another. Recollection is a

viable way to collect this type of data because the objective is to measure attitudes,

behaviors, and perceptions, which are common objectives for surveys (Keyton, 2006).

Recollection can be difficult if the study abroad participant studied years ago, so the

criteria was set to only include study abroad participants that studied abroad in the past

two years or less to improve the chances of accurate responses. Study abroad participants

that had studied earlier than that were used for comparison purposes. The responses from

the study abroad participants will allow for adequate testing of the hypotheses and

research questions since I do not know about their personalities, their social support

networks, or what cultural factors with which they identify. Surveys are frequently used

in communication research, along with being one of the most common in the social

sciences overall (Macias, Springston, Lariscy, & Neustifter, 2008) because of a

foundation in theory and can provide valuable statistical information about populations.

This type of data collection is appropriate to answer the research questions and to

test the hypotheses because I have independent and dependent variables. I am interested

in exploring how and what influences the independent variables (individual,

interpersonal, cultural factors) have on the dependent variable (reentry shock). This

study is also looking at associations among the independent variables and dependent

variable. Surveys allow for measurement of constructs about individual's perceptions

about an event. Model testing allows to statistically test whether the data fits the

proposed model or not by testing associations, links and interactions among variables.

Along with these advantages are some disadvantages. While recall is a highly

utilized approach in quantitative research, it is only about the perception of an event and

not the event itself. Even though this is a disadvantage for most quantitative studies, this functions as an advantage for this study because I am not interested in the actual event itself; I am interested in individual's perceptions about the event. In model testing, there are base assumptions that linearity, homoscedasticity and normality are met in order to account for the variance (Mertler & Vannatta, 2001). These assumptions were met through the research design and data screening in order to avoid violating the assumptions of linearity, homoscedasticity and normality. Checking the assumptions is more detailed in Chapter 4.

Despite these disadvantages, this is the most appropriate method given the hypotheses, research questions and conceptual model. Essentially, I am interested in testing the relationship among constructs and to find out which factor is most influential when one returns from a study abroad experience. Quantitative research is the most realistic option given the goals of this study.

Component One: Conceptualizing and Operationalizing Reentry Shock

Since the literature is so segmented (Kim 2005; Szkudlarek, 2010) and results from studies on reentry shock have shown conflicting results (Martin, 1986; Seiter & Waddell, 1989; Ward & Chang, 1997; Ward et al., 1998; Gaw, 2000; Oguri & Gudykunst, 2002; Swagler & Jome, 2005), this study aims at providing more answers as to why this area is so segmented and begin answering the questions of what factor(s) is (are) most influential when one returns from a study abroad experience.

Step 1: Item generation. When creating any new type of quantitative measure, minimum requirements of validity need to be met in order to ensure the measure is evaluating what it is intending to (Baxter & Babbie, 2004; Keyton, 2006). The first step

to obtain face validity was to identify themes in the literature that look like what one is trying to measure. Since my measure is about reentry shock, I will not include indicators that are irrelevant to the construct. Not one indicator can measure a single construct; so at least three indicators are needed to fulfill the burden of proof for content validity. These requirements are necessary to meet the burden of proof in developing a new scale. The following section will outline participants, procedures and data analysis for step one of the first component of this study.

Participants. Participants were recruited from a large southwestern university's study abroad office through a study abroad advisor key informant. In order to maintain anonymity and confidentiality, the researcher sent recruitment emails to the key informant, and the key informant forwarded said emails to previous study abroad students. These students received a link to the open-ended questions via Survey Monkey and clicked through a consent form in order to proceed to the questions. Basic demographic information was asked to describe the population in the results section. Emails were sent to over 60 previous study abroad students. Twenty-three individuals that have studied abroad for at least four months or more in order to meet the requirements of a semester of study abroad completed the survey indicating a 38% response rate. The average age of the population was 22.5, with 41% males and 58% females; 75% identified as White, 2% identified as Hispanic/Latino, 1% identified as Asian, and the remaining did not identify their race/ethnicity. These study abroad participants studied in countries such as England, China, Japan, Sweden, Hong Kong, Germany, Israel, France, Australia, New Zealand, Denmark and Scotland. The average length of the study abroad experience was eight months. The data reached a saturation

point where nothing new emerged, which is necessary for creating a new measure

(Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Themes were created to code the data and the point of

saturation was reached because nothing new and relevant to the study was presented

outside of these themes. This also meets the requirements of face and content validity

(Keyton, 2006).

Procedures. The first step was to identify the dimensions of reentry shock.

Open-ended questions were created from the literature to identify the various dimensions

of reentry shock (refer to Appendix A for questions). These questions were designed to

generate dialogue about the participants' reactions to returning and their experiences

related to the various constructs outlined in the literature review (i.e., individual,

interpersonal, and cultural factors).

These data were collected online via the Survey Monkey tool for online web

surveys. Since it is difficult to gather a group of individuals that have studied abroad for

a semester or more in one place since they are not all necessarily in one class together, a

feasible way to gather this type of data is online. The participants' anonymity and

confidentiality were ensured by not saving the IP address while completing the survey as

well as allowing more than one survey to be completed on the same computer. This

allowed for participants to utilize public access computers if they do not own a personal

computer.

Data analysis. These data from the open-ended surveys were used to generate

indicators for the quantitative measure on reentry shock. The indicators and themes

generated from these open-ended questions are found in Appendix B. These data were

analyzed via constant comparison since it has been used successfully in the creation of

measures (e.g., Zhang & Oetzel, 2006). Through constant comparison, themes were created to generate indicators for a scale to measure the severity of reentry shock. To create these themes, at least three similar responses were categorized under one of the eight themes. Since the literature alone does not provide enough detail about study abroad participants' experiences, it was vital to obtain responses from actual study abroad participants so the measure reflects as close as possible to the experiences of reentry shock.

From the open-ended survey responses, eight themes were identified, with at least three common responses comprising a theme. These eight themes were then condensed into three dimensions, with one dimension measuring negative experience of reentry shock and the other two measuring positive experience of reentry. These three dimensions constitute the Multifaceted Reentry Shock Scale, comprised of 16 indicators, found in Appendix B. These all measure reentry shock because not all shock is negative, despite the connotations with the word 'shock'. The first dimension, Feeling of Loss, measured negative experience of reentry shock and how one may feel depressed to come back to the United States and how one may feel as though (s)he may not be interested in those who have not studied abroad before upon returning. The second and third dimensions, Appreciation for Other Cultures and Self-Improvement and Advancement, measured if the study abroad participant has more respect for others living in countries outside of the United States and are more goal-oriented in their life post study abroad.

Step 2: Construct validity. In order to obtain construct validity, already validated and reliable scales were combined in the final survey to test for correlation. If the measure I created is strongly correlated to constructs hypothesized as positively or

negatively related, then the measure has construct validity (Larkey, 1996). Since there are many dimensions of reentry shock and many indicators were generated, I only utilized two already validated and reliable scales. This kept the survey as short as possible so the participants did not get survey fatigue and provide inaccurate answers. I only used the indicators with the highest factor loadings from the validated scales to keep the final size to a minimum and I collected data concurrently to test the conceptual model as well as validating the new scale. The Reentry Shock Scale (Seiter & Wadell, 1989) was also used to test for concurrent validity since my new measure and this one measure similar constructs. The difference between mine and Seiter and Waddell's (1989) is that mine is created from study abroad individuals and Seiter and Waddell's (1989) was created from themes in previous literature.

The positively related scale I used is the communication anxiety inventory (Booth-Butterfield & Gould, 1986). The negatively related scale I used is the uncertainty response scale (Greco & Roger, 2001). Each of these scales were correlated with each of the dimensions to test for construct validity. I hypothesized the Feeling of Loss dimension to be positively correlated with the Communication Anxiety Form State Inventory (Booth-Butterfield & Gould, 1986) since when one is experiencing a feeling of loss, a high level of anxiety is expected due to an unfamiliar environment. I hypothesized the Feeling of Loss dimension to have a negative correlation with the Uncertainty Response Scale (Greco & Rogers, 2001) since this scale measures how receptive individuals are to an unpredictable environment and feelings of loss are not conducive to an unpredictable environment.

The Appreciation and Improvement dimensions were only hypothesized to be correlated with the Uncertainty Response scale since the Communication Anxiety Form State Inventory is not related. The second dimension, Appreciation for Other Cultures, is hypothesized to have a positive correlation with the Uncertainty Response Scale (Greco & Rogers, 2001) because if one has a respect for others and is more understanding and compassionate, then he or she may be more receptive and understanding to an uncertain environment. The third dimension, Self-Improvement and Advancement, is hypothesized to have a positive correlation with the Uncertainty Response Scale (Greco & Rogers, 2001) because if one is more goal oriented and understanding the full context of conversations, then the individual will feel more comfortable in an uncertain environment because (s)he has ambitions and confidence to get through whatever the individual may encounter.

The Communication Anxiety Inventory was chosen for various reasons. Since previous research has noted returning study abroad participants as anxious, nervous, and stressed (Seiter & Waddell, 1989; Martin, 1993; Gaw, 2000; Sussman, 2000; Christofi & Thompson, 2007), it is likely that returning study abroad participants will be anxious in interacting with their friends, family, acquaintances, and many others while transitioning home. Another reason why this scale was chosen is because there are two scales to choose from on this phenomenon: the form trait inventory and the form state inventory. The form state inventory was used because it specifically relates to a period of time in one's life—such as when they are readjusting back to their home life. Booth-Butterfield and Gould generated both scales in 1986 to provide for a more accessible scale than the State Anxiety Inventory that was available at the time. The form state identity allows for

the researcher to reference the participant to a specific time in their life that they felt anxious interacting with others. The form state inventory has internal consistency, with an alpha coefficient of .89. The form state inventory contains 20 items that participants relate to a communication experience during a certain period of their life. Participants ranks the questions on a one to five scale, with one being not at all and five being very much so, to questions such as, "My words became confused and jumbled when I was speaking," or "While speaking, it was easy to find the right words to express myself." The questions are tabulated to obtain a final score and the higher the score, the higher the communication anxiety in that particular moment of time. This scale will be truncated and only up to seven indicators with the highest factor loadings will be used in order to minimize the size of the final measure.

The other scale, the Uncertainty Response Scale (URS), was used to test negative correlation. Within this scale, there are three dimensions. The dimension of interest for this study is the desire for change dimension, which measures one's desire for novelty and enjoyment of uncertainty (Greco & Roger, 2001). Since the literature notes a high degree of anxiety when returning, it is only logical to assume that a study abroad participant with high anxiety does not enjoy uncertainty. Thus, the URS should predict a negative correlation with the first dimension, Feeling of Loss. The desire for change dimension has sixteen indicators, with examples such as, "I find the prospect of change exciting and stimulating," and "I enjoy unexpected events." The alpha coefficient for the desire for change dimension was .83, displaying internal consistency. To shorten the length of the scale, only seven indicators with the highest factor loadings from the total sixteen in the desire for change dimension were used. This scale is calculated similarly to

the Communication Anxiety Form State Inventory, with higher scores noting high desires for change.

Component Two: Model Testing

I collected data for both components of this study concurrently because the study population is very specific and collecting it twice would be very difficult. The second component of the methods involved in this research study is through model testing. The conceptual model presented in Figure 1 at the end of the previous literature review chapter was tested with the data collected concurrently with the data collected to validate the new measure. After describing the participants, measures, procedures and data analysis involved with component two, the open-ended survey questions will be provided along with the final quantitative measure. Appendix A includes the open-ended questions, Appendix B includes the final 16-item new measure, and Appendix C includes the entire quantitative measure with all scales.

Participants. Participants were recruited from a number of different universities around the country due to the difficult nature of recruiting a sufficient number of individuals from a single university. Since this sample was largely obtained through a snowball effect, a response rate is impossible to obtain. The final number of participants was 158. Participants were recruited through a key informant from universities in the Northeast (14.6%, n = 18), Midwest (29.3%, n = 36), South (20.3%, n = 25), and West (35.8%, n = 44), utilizing the regional names indentified by the U. S. Census. Thirty-five (22.2%) did not indicate which university they attend. One hundred twenty participants were female (82.8%) and 25 were male (17.2%). Thirteen (8.2%) did not indicated a sex. Race/ethnic identity was left open for participants to identify as they wish, with

White/Caucasian at 75.9% (n = 104), Hispanic/Latino(a)/Chicano(a)/Mexican at 10.2%

(n = 14), Asian (Chinese, Japanese, Indian) at 5.1% (n = 7), Mixed at 7.3% (n =10),

African American at .7% (n = 1), and Other at .7% (n = 1). Twenty-one did not indicate a

racial/ethnic identity. Age ranged from 18-33, with the average age being 22 (29.2%).

The participants studied in countries from all over the world, with Western Europe being

the most common (59%, n = 85). The most common year to study abroad was in 2009,

with 37.4% (n = 52) of participants studying during that year. The most common length

of study abroad was five to six months, with 31.9% (n = 46) of participants studying for

this duration.

Contact was attained from these key informants and the complete 63-item survey

was sent via email in a Survey Monkey link for participants to fill out at their

convenience. If they chose not to participate, they simply ignored the email request. In

order to meet the minimum requirements for confirmatory factor analysis, 200

participants were needed to fulfill the preponderance of evidence (Kline, 2005). Without

a large sample, it would be difficult to find effects among the various factors. The larger

the sample, the higher the statistical power the study will have in predicting what factor is

most important, responding to the hypotheses and lessening the chances of committing a

type II error (Baxter & Babbie, 2004). Since only 158 responses were collected, the data

set was duplicated to conduct confirmatory factor analysis. Pallant (2007) and

Tabachnick and Fidell (2007) discuss duplicating a data set to address complex statistical

analyses. While this procedure is not the most desirable, it is acceptable when an

adequately sized data set is acquired. Since 158 responses were collected, this was an

adequate enough size to duplicate solely for confirmatory factor analysis purposes. The original data set was utilized for hypothesis and research question testing.

Measures. Along with the Multifaceted Reentry Shock Scale that was generated through indicators from the open-ended survey data, three already validated and reliable scales were used in combination to test the hypotheses of the model. Since data was collected concurrently for component one and component two, each of the scales were shortened to keep the full survey size to a minimum. Up to seven indicators from these scales with the highest factor loadings were used in the final survey to alleviate participant fatigue. The Eysenck Personality Questionnaire Brief Version (Sato, 2005), the MOS social support survey (Sherbourne & Stewart, 1991), and the cultural distance index (Mumford, 1998) were used to test the three hypotheses regarding the conceptual model on these factors: individual, interpersonal, and cultural. While the organizational factor is important, it is beyond the scope of this thesis and requires a complete additional study to address pre and post test analyses to test the organizational factor.

Since there was no guarantee that the new scale I created would be valid and reliable and I still needed to test the conceptual model, I also used one of the scales already reliable and validated in order to avoid the mishap of not being able to test my model. Included in the final measure was Seiter and Waddell's (1989) Reverse Shock Scale, which contains sixteen items generated from literature about reverse culture shock. Sample questions include, "When I returned people did not seem that much interested in my experience abroad," and "When I returned home I felt really depressed." This scale reported an alpha coefficient of .77, indicating internal consistency. Since factor loadings

are not available for this scale, I included six items that were the most relevant to my research focus.

The Eysenck Personality Questionnaire Brief Version (Sato, 2005) was used to measure the individual factor. This measure contains two dimensions: extraversion and neuroticism, with 12 items on each. The response format is Likert-type items, with sample questions such as "I like action and excitement around me," and "I am a talkative person." In order to keep the length of the survey as short as possible, only the five highest factor loading items were included in the final measure. The alpha coefficient for the extraversion scale was .91, reporting high reliability.

To test the interpersonal factor, the MOS social support survey was used (Sherbourne & Stewart, 1991). This multidimensional 20-item measure contains four dimensions, emotional and informative support, tangible support, positive interactions and affection. The dimensions of interest for the current study are the emotional and informative support and the positive interactions. Individuals rank their answers on a Likert-type scale responding to the frequency of sample questions such as, "Someone you can count on to listen to you when you need to talk" and "Someone who understands your problems". The emotional and informative support has an alpha coefficient of .94, indicating high reliability. The eight questions from the two dimensions of interest were included to test the model.

The last scale utilized to measure the cultural factor is the Cultural Distance Index (Mumford, 1998). This questionnaire contains 20 items, asking survey respondents to rank how similar or different something is in comparison to the United Kingdom. This index was altered to reflect similarities and differences with the United States, and

individuals will rank their answers utilizing a seven-point Likert-type scale. Questions

ranged from comparing the type of dress, to similarities in language, to food, to religion

and etiquette on respect. The Cronbach's alpha was .87, reporting high reliability. Of the

20 items, only eight items were included because some items are irrelevant and to keep

the size of the survey as short as possible.

Procedures. Once contact was made with the key informants about attaining past

study abroad participants via email, the final quantitative measure was distributed via

email through a link to the survey on Survey Monkey online. The researcher provided an

email for the key informants to pass onto possible participants to fill out at their leisure

and pass onto others. Individuals that have studied in another country other than the

United States for at least a semester or more within the past two years was the population

aim. Anything beyond two years is difficult to recollect, so the more recent the study

abroad experience, the more relevant and accurate answers will be provided.

Data analysis. To prepare the data set for hypothesis testing, confirmatory factor

analysis was first conducted to ensure the new measure was valid and reliable. After

completing the confirmatory factor analysis and running reliability assessments, multiple

regression and hierarchical multiple regression were conducted to test the conceptual

model, hypotheses, and research questions.

Confirmatory factor analysis. The data was first analyzed utilizing confirmatory

factor analysis to test the factors of the new reentry shock measure. Confirmatory factor

analysis is a statistical analysis tool that is not used frequently and often misunderstood,

but is very useful in creating measures and testing dimensionality (Levine, 2005). Levine

(2005) stated utilizing confirmatory factor analysis more in communication research

"would likely improve the quality of measurement in quantitative communication research" (p. 335).

Confirmatory factor analysis is used for three criteria to test validity. First, when the researcher has prior knowledge about which items measure what construct, confirmatory factor analysis is used (Levine, 2005). Second, it is also used when constructs are measured with multiple indicators, with the items in the scale indicate a linear relationship to the average or total of the scale outcome (Levine, 2005). Third, since it provides a number of information on the validity of scales together, it is an appropriate method to test for the validity of a new measure. The AMOS structural equation modeling software package was used in this step since confirmatory factor analysis is the first step in component two of the method used in this study. Along with using AMOS, SPSS version 16.0 was used to test for internal consistency, utilizing Cronbach's alpha and Pearson's correlation to test if the measure is correlated positively or negatively to the previously described validated scales.

To test model fit, the structural equation modeling software package AMOS was used to test the hypotheses and regression weights in the conceptual model. Model fit indices were used to test for good model fit, utilizing chi-square, chi-square degrees of freedom ratio, the goodness-of-fit index (GFI), the comparative fit index (CFI), the root mean square residual (RMR), and the incremental fit index (IFI). The χ^2 to df ratio ideally is 1, but even a ratio as high as 3 is acceptable (Kline, 1998). The standards needed for GFI, CFI, and IFI is at or above .90, with RMR at or less than .08 (Kline, 1998).

Model testing. Multiple regression and hierarchical multiple regression were used to test model fit of the responses from the questionnaire to the conceptual model. Multiple regression was used to test the significance of the hypotheses and hierarchical multiple regression was used to test interaction effects and to see which variable(s) were more influential than others on the participants' reentry shock. SPSS 16.0 was used to conduct these statistical analyses. This is the most appropriate test given the research goals, hypotheses, and research questions because multiple regression is used for independent variables predicting values on dependent variables, along with providing insight on causal relationships among variables, which is the primary focus of this study (Mertler & Vannatta, 2001). Additionally, the independent variables are continuous and fixed, while the relationship between the independent and dependent variables are linear (Mertler & Vannatta, 2001).

Chapter 4: Analysis and Results

The purpose of this study is to investigate the role communication plays when study abroad participants return to the United States from a study abroad experience. There were two components involved in this study. The first component was to create and validate a new scale measuring multiple dimensions reentry shock since previous scales only measured depression and sadness upon returning. The completion of the first component is necessary for the second component, which is testing the proposed model presented in the literature review chapter. The new scale will be used for model testing with the three independent variables. This model presents a more interactive experience of multiple variables accounting for the reentry shock experience when returning home from study abroad, arguing communication has a key role in these variables.

The first component focused on measurement validity of the new measure created for this study and examining how the three dimensions of the new measure examined relationships among variables. This component did not respond to any of the three hypotheses or two research questions, but this component was necessary in order to test the conceptual model presented in the literature review chapter, which in turn tests the hypotheses and research questions. Confirmatory factor analyses and Pearson's correlations were conducted to validate the new measure.

The second component focused on testing the proposed model, hypotheses, and research questions. To test these hypotheses and research questions, multiple regression and hierarchical multiple regression analyses were conducted to test the significance of the hypotheses. These tests were also conducted to see which variable was most important in the reentry process and to see if the three independent variables

(extraversion, social support, and cultural distance) had any interaction effects. The following chapter discusses the results from the various analyses conducted to answer to test the conceptual model, hypotheses, and research questions.

Component One: Measurement Validity

   Confirmatory factor analysis. Data collected from administration of the 16-item Multifaceted Reentry Shock Scale (Appendix B) were submitted to confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) using the AMOS structural equation modeling software package. AMOS is a common statistical package for validating new instruments to utilize CFA (e.g., Zhang & Oetzel, 2006). The original data set of 158 was duplicated once to create 316 participants solely for confirmatory factor analysis and measurement validity purposes.

   To determine good model fit of the measure, four criteria need to be met, along with model fit indices. First, each individual item must have a factor loading of at least .45. Second, each dimension must have adequate reliability shown through Cronbach's alpha of at least .60. Third, items must only have a single path to one latent variable. Fourth, at least three items need to remain per dimension to measure a single latent variable (Oetzel & Ting-Toomey, 2003).

   Utilizing the duplicated data set, confirmatory factor analysis was conducted. Four iterations were completed to achieve good model fit, using the above criteria and model fit indices. The first iteration did not meet any of the six model fit indices, and two items were deleted from the data set to test for better model fit. The initial model fit indices were as follows: χ^2(475, N = 316) = 1814.15; p = .00; CFI = .78; GFI = .83; IFI =

.78; and, RMR = .21; χ^2/df = 4.705. The data was not a good fit for the original 16-item

survey and initial factor loadings are in Table 2.

Table 2

The Multifaceted Reentry Shock Scale Items and Factor Loadings (First Iteration)

Dimension	Factor Loading
Feeling of Loss	
1. When I returned, I had no interest in others that had not studied abroad.	.53
2. I felt like life did not have as much purpose when I came back to my life in the United States.	.70
3. I felt depressed at the thought of coming home.	.65
4. I felt like I had to pretend to be happy to be back in the United States.	.85
5. I found myself avoiding friends.	.70
6. I lost some friends after I came back from my study abroad experience.	.33
Appreciation for Other Cultures	
7. I now see the world in a different light.	.75
8. I now have more respect for others living in countries outside of the United States.	.71
9. I am now more understanding and compassionate of problems that occur outside of the United States.	.68
10. My study abroad experience expanded my worldview.	.56
11. I realized how small and interconnected the world is because of my study abroad experience.	.54
Self-Improvement and Advancement	
12. After my study abroad experience, I realized what I wanted out of life.	.68
13. I now have goals that I want to accomplish due to the inspiration of my study abroad experience.	.84
14. I had a stronger bond with my family members when I returned home.	.08
15. I was able to understand the full context of conversations when I came back.	.50
16. I am now a better listener.	.54

Items 6 and 14 were deleted from the data set because of low factor loadings and also in attempt to meet the minimum for at least four of the six model fit indices. The second iteration did not produce good model fit and the model fit indices were as follows: χ^2(341, N = 316) = 1648.56; p = .00; CFI = .83; GFI = .86; IFI = .83; and, RMR = .17; χ^2/df = 4.616. Factor loadings were all above .45, so modification indices were examined. Items 6 and 14 were dropped since the regressions weights were linked to another observed variable and would most likely lower the chi square index needed for furthering better model fit (Kline, 1998, 2005).

The third iteration did not produce good model fit, but was approaching the minimum requirements. The model fit indices were as follows: χ^2(159, N = 316) = 1318.31; p = .00; CFI = .91; GFI = .92; IFI = .92; and, RMR = .17; χ^2/df = 3.124. The GFI, CFI, and IFI meet the base requirements, but four of the six indices need to be met for good model fit. Factor loadings were all above .50, so regression weights were examined. Since item 7 was associated with four other indicators in the modification indices, this item was eliminated.

The fourth and final iteration produced good model fit, with 11 items retained for the final measure for hypothesis testing. The model fit indices were as follows: χ^2(121, N = 316) = 1169; p = .00; CFI = .93; GFI = .93; IFI = .93; and, RMR = .16; χ^2/df = 2.955. The final items, factor loadings, and Cronbach's alphas for the entire scale and individual dimension are in Table 3. Each dimension produced good reliability, with Cronbach's alphas above .60 and each dimension had at least three indicators.

Table 3

The Multifaceted Reentry Shock Scale Items, Factor Loadings, and Cronbach's

Alphas (Final Iteration)

Dimension	Factor Loading	Cronbach's Alpha
Feeling of Loss		.81
1. When I returned, I had no interest in others that had not studied abroad.	.51	
2. I felt like life did not have as much purpose when I came back to my life in the United States.	.69	
3. I felt depressed at the thought of coming home.	.66	
4. I felt like I had to pretend to be happy to be back in the United States.	.86	
5. I found myself avoiding friends.	.69	
Appreciation for Other Cultures		.76
6. I now have more respect for others living in countries outside of the United States.	.73	
7. I am now more understanding and compassionate of problems that occur outside of the United States.	.83	
8. I realized how small and interconnected the world is because of my study abroad experience.	.61	
Self-Improvement and Advancement		.71
9. After my study abroad experience, I realized what I wanted out of life.	.72	
10. I now have goals that I want to accomplish due to the inspiration of my study abroad experience.	.82	
11. I was able to understand the full context of conversations when I came back.	.48	
Full 11-Item Scale Cronbach's Alpha		.80

To further test the validity of the new measure, Pearson's correlation tests were conducted to test for construct validity of the new measure. Pearson's correlation allows

researchers to test how similar or dissimilar variables are with one another (Mertler &

Vannatta, 2001). Each dimension was tested for positive and negative correlation with

the Communication Anxiety Form State Inventory (Booth-Butterfield & Gould, 1986)

and the Uncertainty Response Scale (Greco & Roger, 2001). To test for construct

validity, the Reentry Shock Scale (Seiter & Waddell, 1989) was utilized since it is an

already validated and reliable scale and measures similar phenomena. The correlation

matrix, means, and standard deviations are in Table 4.

Table 4

Correlations, Means, and Standard Deviations of the Feeling of Loss Dimension,

Appreciation for Other Cultures Dimension, and the Self-Improvement and

Advancement Dimension with the Communication Anxiety Form State Inventory,

the Uncertainty Response Scale, and the S&W Reentry Shock Scale

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	M	SD
1	1						2.97	1.43
2	.190**	1					5.79	1.03
3	.351**	.381**	1				4.85.	1.25
4	.546**	.104	.174*	1			14.31	8.85
5	.110	.175*	.226**	.019	1		41.99	4.97
6	.789**	.174*	.297**	.499**	.162	1	4.31	1.21

Note. 1 = Feeling of Loss Dimension, 2 = Appreciation for Other Cultures Dimension, 3 = Self-Improvement and Advancement Dimension, 4 = Communication Anxiety Form State Inventory, 5 = Uncertainty Response Scale, 6 = S&W Reentry Shock Scale. **$p<.01$; *$p<.05$, two-tailed.

In summary, the first dimension, Feeling of Loss, was hypothesized to have a positive correlation with the Communication Anxiety Form State Inventory, which was found. However, it was also hypothesized to be negatively correlated with the Uncertainty Response Scale and this was not found. The second dimension, Appreciation for Other Cultures, was hypothesized to be positively correlated with the Uncertainty Response Scale, which was found. The third dimension, Self-Improvement and Advancement, was hypothesized to have a positive correlation with the Uncertainty Response scale and this was found. These latter two dimensions also had a neutral relationship with the Communication Anxiety From State Inventory as expected. Further, all dimensions were hypothesized to be positively correlated with the S&W Reentry Shock Scale and this was found. Overall, the new measure has construct validity.

Component Two: Model Testing Analysis

To test the hypotheses and answer the research questions, multiple regression was conducted. To test the research questions, hierarchical multiple regression was conducted. These tests were conducted using SPSS 16.0 statistical software package. Prior to completing these analyses, assumptions were checked.

Checking assumptions. Before presenting results, assumptions of normality, outliers, and multicollinearity need to be checked. Assumptions of normality can be met through research design by soliciting a large number of participants (Mertler & Vannatta, 2001). Data can be assumed to be distributed normally if the sample size is large enough. To check the assumptions of multicollinearity for multiple regression, the first step is to make sure that the independent variables have some sort of relationship with the dependent variable by examining the correlations table output from SPSS. It is preferable

that the correlation be above .3, but not over .7 (Pallant, 2007). The second step is to examine tolerance and VIF, which are presented in collinearity diagnostics in the coefficients table output from SPSS. As stated by Pallant (2007), "tolerance is an indicator of how much of the variability of the specified independent is not explained by the other independent variables in the model" (p. 156). If the value is smaller than .10, then multicollinearity is very possible. In addition, if the VIF is above 10, then multicollinearity is a possibility (Pallant, 2007).

To test for normality and outliers, inspection of the Normal Probability Plot and Scatterplot is necessary. If the points in the Normal Probability Plot relatively follow the diagonal line presented, then you have not violated assumptions of normality. In the Scatterplot, items will be roughly distributed in a rectangular shape, complying with the assumptions of normality. Mahlanobis and Cook's distances also determine if outliers skew the data. To examine these distances, the values are presented in the residuals statistics table from SPSS output. Depending on the number of independent variables, critical values must not be exceeded (Pallant, 2007; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). Since I have three independent values, the critical value must not exceed 16.27 for Mahlanobis distance. For Cook's distance, the value must not exceed 1 (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007).

Based on the above criteria of normality, outliers, multicollinearity, Mahlanobis and Cook's distance, none of the assumptions were violated for any of the multiple regression analyses. Each analysis did not exceed .10 for tolerance nor 10 for VIF, thus, multicollinearity standards were not exceeded. Normal Probability Plots were examined, and all three of them relatively followed the diagonal line. Scatterplots were examined and items were roughly distributed in a rectangular shape. Mahlanobis distances were

not exceeded since the values did not breach 16.27, nor did Cook's distance values breach 1.

Model testing. Three separate multiple regressions were conducted for each dependent variable of the Multifaceted Reentry Shock Scale to test the hypotheses. The first model was conducted between the Feeling of Loss dimension (DV) and three independent variables (extraversion, social support, and cultural distance). This analysis revealed the only significant contributor to the Feeling of Loss was social support, $F(3, 131) = 3.56, p < .01$. R^2 for the model was .076, accounting for 7.6% of the variance. The relationship was negative. Pearson's correlations and M and SD are in Table 5. Table 6 displays standardized regression coefficients (β), observed t values, and significance for each variable with the Feeling of Loss dimension.

Table 5

Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations of the Feeling of Loss Dimension with the Cultural Distance Scale, the Extraversion Scale, and the Social Support Scale

Variable	1	2	3	4	M	SD
1	1				2.97	1.43
2	.103	1			3.81	1.36
3	.084	.094	1		4.61	1.44
4	-.215	.156	.128	1	5.56	1.17

Note. 1 = Feeling of Loss Dimension, 2 = Cultural Distance Scale, 3 = Extraversion Scale, 4 = Social Support Scale.
**p<.01; *p<.05, two-tailed.

Table 6

Feeling of Loss and Independent Variables Multiple Regression Results

Independent Variable	B	SE B	β	t	Sig.
Cultural Distance	.139	.090	.132	1.5	.125
Extraversion	.102	.084	.103	1.2	.226
Social Support	-.303	.104	-.249	2.9	.004**

**Statistically significant: p < .05; dependent variable: Feeling of Loss

The second model was conducted with the Appreciation of Other Cultures (DV) and the three independent variables (extraversion, social support, and cultural distance). This analysis did not reveal any significant contributors to the Appreciation for Other Cultures dimension, $F(3, 133) = .192$, $p > .05$. R^2 for the model was .004, accounting for .4% of the variance. Pearson's correlations and M and SD are in Table 7. Table 8 displays standardized regression coefficients (β), observed t values, and significance for each variable with the Appreciation for Other Cultures dimension.

Table 7

Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations of the Appreciation for Other Cultures Dimension with the Cultural Distance Scale, the Extraversion Scale, and the Social Support Scale

Variable	1	2	3	4	M	SD
1	1				5.78	1.04
2	-.030	1			3.84	1.36
3	.040	.111	1		4.63	1.44
4	.038	.138	.113	1	5.55	1.17

Note. 1 = Appreciation for Other Cultures Dimension, 2 = Cultural Distance Scale, 3 = Extraversion Scale, 4 = Social Support Scale.
**p<.01; *p<.05, two-tailed.

Table 8

Appreciation for Other Cultures and Independent Variables Multiple Regression Results

Independent Variable	B	SE B	β	t	Sig.
Cultural Distance	-.030	.530	-.040	-.45	.651
Extraversion	.029	.063	.040	.46	.646
Social Support	.035	.078	.039	.45	.655

**Statistically significant: p < .05; dependent variable: Appreciation for Other Cultures

The third model was conducted with the Self-Improvement and Advancement

(DV) and the three independent variables (extraversion, social support, and cultural

distance). This analysis did not reveal any significant contributors to the Self-

Improvement and Advancement dimension, $F(3, 131) = .581$ $p > .05$. R^2 for the model

was .013, accounting for 1.3% of the variance. Pearson's correlations, M, and SD are in

Table 9. Table 10 displays standardized regression coefficients (β), observed t values,

and significance for each variable with the Self-Improvement and Advancement

dimension.

Table 9

Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations of the Self-Improvement and

Advancement Dimension with the Cultural Distance Scale, the Extraversion Scale,

and the Social Support Scale

Variable	1	2	3	4	M	SD
1	1				4.81	1.28
2	.041	1			3.83	1.37
3	.090	.107	1		4.61	1.45
4	.077	.138	.111	1	5.55	1.18

Note. 1 = Self-Improvement and Advancement Dimension, 2 = Cultural Distance Scale, 3 = Extraversion Scale, 4 = Social Support Scale.
**p<.01; *p<.05, two-tailed.

Table 10

Self-Improvement and Advancement and Independent Variables Multiple

Regression Results

Independent Variable	B	SE B	β	t	Sig.
Cultural Distance	.022	.082	.023	.26	.791
Extraversion	.071	.078	.080	.90	.365
Social Support	.071	.096	.065	.74	.460

**Statistically significant: p < .05; dependent variable: Self-Improvement and Advancement

To answer the second research question about interaction effects, I employed

hierarchical multiple regression to test the influence of each independent variable

(cultural distance, social support, and extraversion) on the dependent variables (Feeling

of Loss, Appreciation for Other Cultures, and Self-Improvement and Advancement).

Three separate analyses were conducted, one for each dependent variable, with the three

independent variables in the first block and four interaction terms in the second block.

Only results from the Feeling of Loss dimension are presented since the others did not

show any statistical significance. The individual independent variables were entered into

Step 1 (cultural distance, extraversion, and social support), explaining 7.6% of the

variance. After entry of the cross-product of the independent variables (interaction,

social support and extraversion, social support and cultural distance, and cultural distance

and extraversion) at Step 2, the total variance explained by the model as a whole was 8%,

$F(1, 130) = .647$, $p > .05$. The hierarchical regression analysis did not yield significant

results. Since none of these values were below the .05 value, no one particular variable is significant to predicting a feeling of loss when returning to the United States from a study abroad experience. These three particular variables do not have any interaction effects in relation to reentry shock.

In summary, the hypotheses and research questions were as follows:

H1: The more extraverted the study abroad participant is, the less severe the reentry shock the study abroad participant experiences.

H2: The more supportive interaction the study abroad participant receives from his or her social support network, the less severe the reentry shock.

H3: The more culturally distant the host country from the home country, the more intense the reentry shock.

RQ1: What factor(s) is (are) most influential on the severity of reentry shock?

RQ2: Do the factors have interaction effects on their impact on reentry shock?

From these results, the only hypothesis supported was the second hypothesis; the more supportive interaction the study abroad student receives from his or her social support network, the less severe the reentry shock. From these analyses, the first research question was answered, stating the most influential factor on reentry shock is social support. The results for the second research question demonstrated that there were no interactions effects of the independent variables on reentry shock.

Chapter 5: Discussion

The purpose of this study was to create a model of reentry shock and communication, test the model, investigate which communication factor is most important, and to see if there are any interaction effects between the three communication factors (extraversion, social support, and cultural distance). The model as a whole was not explanatory of reentry shock with only the Feeling of Loss dimension being associated negatively with social support. The following chapter discusses a reframe on the term reentry shock, each hypothesis and research question, the implications (both theoretical and practical), the limitations, future directions, and conclusion. Careful attention is paid to discussing why the results were not significant.

Hypotheses and Research Questions

This study presented three hypotheses and two research questions to test a conceptual model of communication and reentry shock. The overall goal was to examine which communication factor(s) are most important to the process of returning to the United States after a study abroad experience. Prior to testing a model of reentry shock and communication, the Multifaceted Reentry Shock Scale was created and validated to test the model. This scale conceptualized and operationalized three dimensions of reentry shock: Feeling of Loss, Appreciation for Other Cultures, and Self-Improvement and Advancement. These dimensions added to the current study of how communication helps to recognize which dimension is most important. Two dimensions are new to this area (Appreciation for Other Cultures and Self-Improvement and Advancement) and measure positive aspects of reentry shock, when other measures have solely measured the negative aspects (Fray, 1988; Seiter & Waddell, 1989). Other studies have

conceptualized reentry shock as negative (Barna, 1976; Brein & David, 1971; Martin, 1986; Chang, 1997; Gaw, 2000; Grushina, 2005; Swagler & Jome, 2005; Sobre-Denton & Hart, 2008; Szkudlarek, 2010) and this new scale reconceptualizes reentry shock by adding dimensions of appreciation for others and intrapersonal growth. This new scale also has more of a communication focus because the emphasis is on talking about the experiences, not the feelings about the experiences. The three independent variables are extraversion, social support, and cultural distance. The research questions examined a) the most important factor and b) if there are any interaction effects amongst the variables in conjunction with the level of reentry shock. Each variable was tested with the Multifaceted Reentry Shock Scale, employing multiple regression and hierarchical multiple regression analyses.

Since this new scale measures more than just the negative aspects of reentry shock, I propose that it should be simply titled reentry experience, not reentry shock. The word 'shock' has negative connotations and if the wording of the process itself changes, then the perceptions about the process may also change because individuals will not immediately see, hear, and think about the word 'shock' for it to influence the reentry process. This name change could provide the revision and direction in this research area that is called for by many current reentry experience researchers (Sobre-Denton & Hart, 2005; Kim, 2005; Grushina, 2008; Szkudlarek, 2010).

Hypotheses. Since statistical significance was only found with the first hypothesis with the Feeling of Loss dimension, I will first focus on all three hypotheses and the Feeling of Loss dimension, and then discuss the other two dimensions and all hypotheses. The first hypothesis presented in this study is the more extraverted the study

abroad participant is, the less severe the reentry shock the study abroad participants experiences. The extraversion dimension of the Eysenck Personality Questionnaire Brief Version (Sato, 2005) was used to measure for extraversion. Statistical analyses yielded lack of significance for this variable with each of the three dimensions of the Multifaceted Reentry Shock Scale (Feeling of Loss, Appreciation for Other Cultures, and Self-Improvement and Advancement). Thus, a more extraverted personality does not necessarily equate a more or less successful transition back into the United States and does not affect the amount or quality of talk regarding reentry shock issues or topics.

In prior research, Church (1982) found extraversion to be the key of successful communication in unknown situations, especially when traveling abroad and returning home. Chang (1997) also stated that the less extraverted you are, the more difficulties you will encounter when returning home. The lack of discussion about ill and uncomfortable feelings when returning home hinders one's ability to handle the changes accompanying an experience abroad. Although extraversion was not a statistically significant predictor of reentry shock, most participants were extraverted individuals ($M=$ 4.6, $SD = 1.44$). Swagler and Jome (2005) noted less empirical and theoretical support for extraversion and traveling abroad, but did find extraversion to be a significant factor in the adjustment process. Since Swagler and Jome (2005), Chang (1997), and the current study found conflicting results, future research may be needed to solely focus on this personality trait to tease out specifically why this variable is or is not important to the reentry process. The inclusion of online communication could be a factor, since most study abroad participants can now easily stay in touch with family and friends through email, Skype, and social networking sites. Thus, the more communication and

interaction they have with family and friends while abroad, being able to talk about their experiences when they come back home may not be an issue since interaction *while* abroad is higher. It is an even more important variable currently since those avenues of communication were not as readily available as they are now.

The second hypothesis presented in this study is the more supportive interaction the study abroad participant receives from his or her social support network, the less severe the reentry shock. The MOS Social Support Survey (Sherbourne & Stewart, 1991) was used to measure not only the amount of social support received, but the quality and availability as well. Multiple regression analyses yielded statistical significance with the Feeling of Loss dimension. This states that when study abroad participants return back to the United States, the availability and quality of interaction with friends and family is positively associated in dealing with feelings of loss.

This hypothesis reinforces Brein and David's (1971) study on travelers that encounter reentry shock, stating the more communication about the experience, the more successful reentry experience. Not only is it important to have that social support system available, but it is also important about how and what is discussed when the study abroad participants return. Additionally, Martin (1986) stated communication is the essence of reentry and without which, one cannot fully comprehend the experience of being abroad and returning home. The same study discussed the importance of discussing feelings and experiences with family and friends in order to make sense of the experience into the study abroad participant's lives, similarly to the significance found in this study. Further, Krisjánsdóttir (2009) noted the importance of participants discussing their experiences with individuals with similar experience in order to understand it more so. Future studies

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could examine communication between study abroad participants with similar experiences and how that can help the reentry process.

Additionally, it is important for participants to discuss growth and change, as measured by the other two dimensions of the new measure (Appreciation for Other Cultures and Self-Improvement and Advancement). The availability of the social support network will allow former study abroad participants to discuss the experiences and essentially go through the reentry shock process through interaction. The current study only produced significant results with the Feeling of Loss dimension, but these other dimensions open up other areas of interest for researchers and study abroad offices alike to discuss the process of reentry and how communication is to facilitative tool in navigating reentry shock. If the Self-Improvement and Advancement dimension is most prominent with a given study abroad student population, then study abroad offices could focus on providing opportunities for these students to pursue more goals. Additionally, if the Appreciation for Other Cultures dimension is the most prominent, then study abroad offices could provide opportunities for former study abroad students to discuss and share this knowledge with other students, perhaps in a forum or in a manner to recruit future study abroad students.

The third hypothesis presented in this study is the more culturally distant the host country from the home country, the more intense the reentry shock. To measure cultural distance, I employed a modified version of the Cultural Distance Index (Mumford, 1998), adjusted to reflect citizens of the United States, since it was originally created for citizens of the United Kingdom. Statistical analyses did not yield significant results, showing cultural differences between host and home cultures is not a factor to study abroad

participants in this particular study. Thus, cultural distance does not influence the ability
to talk about reentry issues or topics.

No statistical significance was found for all three hypotheses with the
Appreciation for Other Cultures and Self-Improvement and Advancement dimensions.
One possible reason for this could be that changes and growth could be intrapersonal and
self-reflective. Instead of discussing these new appreciations and self-improvements with
others, former study abroad participants may just be internally reflective about these
experiences instead of seeking social support or discussing these experiences openly with
others.

Even though this study's results contradicted Barna's (1976) discussion of the
more culturally distant host country, the more difficult reentry, there are a couple of
possible reasons why this study did not produce significant results relating to the cultural
distance variable. First, Barna's study was conducted about 30 years ago and the United
States has become increasingly multicultural since then, so cultural distance may not be
an issue in the 21st century when studying abroad and returning home. Second, cultural
distance may not be an issue since a large portion of the participants studied in Western
Europe and Oceania (Australia and New Zealand) (65.9%), which are culturally similar
to the United States. An additional study comparing participants that studied at culturally
similar countries to the United States (such as Western Europe, Australia, and New
Zealand) and compare it to participants that studied in culturally dissimilar countries
(such as third world and Asian countries). Finally, age may also have determined why
cultural distance was not significant.

Research questions. The first research question presented in this study is asking which factor(s) is (are) most influential on the severity of reentry shock. The statistical analyses displayed social support as the only, and thus, the most influential factor on reentry shock. This reinforces Martin's (1986) study results on reentry shock and communication and her claim that communication is the essence of reentry, along with Brein and David's (1971) finding that the more communication there is when the individual is returning, the more successful reentry.

The second research question presented in this study is asking if the factors have interaction effects on their impact on reentry shock. None of the hierarchical multiple regression analyses produced significant results. While multiple studies found significant results for extraversion, cultural distance, and social support individually (Barna, 1976; Spence-Brown, 1993; Chang, 1997; Neto, 2002; Swagler & Jome, 2005; Krisjánsdóttir, 2009), it was logical to group these variables together, but these three did not have an impact on one another.

There may be a couple of reasons why these three factors did not have any interaction effects. In terms of cultural distance and extraversion, the reason for no interaction effects could be because the majority of participants went to culturally similar countries to the United States. Extraversion is the ability to talk about the experiences, while larger cultural distance can inhibit the ability to discuss the experiences. Since most participants did not study in cultural different countries from the United States, cultural distance may not interact with extraversion and the ability to discuss experiences. Similar to cultural distance and extraversion, there was no interaction effect between cultural distance and social support because the cultural distance did not inhibit

participants' ability to talk about the experiences with their social support networks. Further, social support is important regardless of cultural contact, so distance would not interact with support. Last, the extraversion and social support would not have any interaction could possibly be because of the availability of technology and the ability to stay in touch more readily and easily while abroad, thus not needing as much social interaction when returning.

Implications

  Theoretical. First, this study adds to the theoretical background of reentry shock research. It adds to the existing body of research in a segmented area by applying the interpersonal aspect of communication and how it facilitates reentry shock. Research on reentry shock has traditionally focused on individual traits (e.g., Munz, 2007; Krisjánsdóttir, 2009) and the emotional and psychological state (e.g., Oberg, 1960; Gullahorn & Gullahorn, 1966; Gaw, 2000). This research incorporates communication and how it encompasses the reentry process by discussing the experiences to comprehend them and incorporate it into the participant's everyday life. Communication is the tool that helps to facilitate a more successful reentry process.

  Additionally, this study adds on to the current body of research on reentry shock as well as communication. While the research on reentry shock supports the "shock" and feeling of loss aspect of reentry shock (Gullahorn & Gullahorn, 1966; Barna, 1976; Martin, 1986; Gaw, 2000; Grushina, 2005; Hess & Callahan, 2005), it does not discuss how one newly appreciates other cultures and how one endures a stage of self-improvement. From a communication perspective, the people in which discussion and interaction of these positive experiences take place is where this research adds to the

existing communication research. Specifically, it adds the factors of also discussing the

positive aspects of reentry, not just the negative. Future research could investigate what

types of communication in particular facilitate the best and most among returning study

abroad participants. Renaming the process as reentry experience could begin

amalgamating the research and providing more direction for future reentry shock

researchers to design new studies.

Since the three factors together did not produce significant results, there is no new

model since only one factor, social support, was statistically significant. Interpersonal

relationships, specifically with family and friends, are the most necessary factor when

participants return from study abroad. Talking about experiences and having available

outlets such as family and friends are especially important to make sense of the

experience to incorporate the experience into their lives in the United States.

In terms of research, these three specific variables do not interact with one another

and do not provide insight in predicting or accounting for changes on goes through after a

study abroad experience, even though there was overwhelming support and rationale for

these three factors to be joined together in one study. One could speculate on a couple of

reasons why these did not work. One reason could be that the majority of the participants

studied for a shorter amount of time, making reentry shock less relevant. A second

reason could be the sample. Even though participants were from all over the United

States, it may have been more effective to focus on one university or one geographical

location to see if the variables worked for the sample. Another reason could be the place

the participants studied abroad in since a large number of the countries were culturally

similar to the United States. However, it does lead to more research involving reentry

shock and social support, which is described in more detail in the future directions section. The current study is only one example variable at each level, so the model still may work, it just did not work with these example variables with this particular sample.

Last, the newly constructed and validated scale can be used in study abroad programs to survey study abroad participants to see what dimension (Feeling of Loss, Appreciation for Other Cultures, or Self-Improvement and Advancement) is most important to students and address it accordingly. This is the most important point because it allows researchers to conceptualize reentry shock, measure it, and look at reentry shock as something more than a feeling of loss or a depressive state. Instead, the Multifaceted Reentry Shock Scale allows researchers to expand on the area of reentry shock by not only incorporating communication, but the growth and new appreciation and self-improvement study abroad participants may experience. The new measure is important because it integrates the growth aspect of reentry, not just the loss. This aspect of reentry is essential in expanding the research because when one returns from an experience abroad, it is not *just* feelings of loss or discussing the negatives about the experience, it is also about the new appreciations and sense of growth as well.

Practical. This research provides insight to study abroad programs to focus on discussing the experiences and social support for participants when they return. In times of budget cuts and limited resources, instead of focusing on multiple facets of reentry shock, study abroad offices can now focus on one facet. Promoting discussion between former study abroad participants and their social support networks will facilitate an easier transition back into the United States.

The practical implications of this study outweigh the theoretical. First, this information could be very helpful to study abroad offices, especially in the time of budget cuts and deficits. Instead of focusing efforts in various avenues (such as discussing cultural distance or personality specific to the current study), time and effort can be spent on what *does* matter—social support. This information could lead study abroad offices to develop something for friends and family about what to expect from study abroad participants when he or she returns and vice versa. Similar to tips put together by Pusch and La Brack (2001) for parents of returning students, this could be expanded to include friends and other interpersonal relationships in the form of promoting discussion to socialize and connect with others. Particularly important in the current time of recession, identifying areas of need and actual importance will direct funds in areas that will have an actual impact. Further, training or advising on social support can be more directly given to participants when they return, especially since a large number of governmental and tax dollars are invested in study abroad. Overall, this study offers solid direction for study abroad offices to (1) offer tips to friends and family of former study abroad participants to be prepared when (s)he returns, (2) provides information for study abroad offices to create opportunities for socializing with other study abroad participants, and (3) discusses the importance of talking about the experiences, so advisors and other study abroad personnel can promote to former study abroad students the necessity of discussing the experiences with social support networks or with other study abroad students.

If I were to offer some information or tips to study abroad advisors, I would tell them how important it is that the study abroad participants get opportunities to discuss their experiences. Even if they do not talk with the study abroad advisors themselves,

they could create and provide social opportunities for individuals to connect with other

study abroad students or develop some type of symposium where students could present

their experiences, which could do double duty by advertising and recruitment for the

programs. Whatever the particular study abroad offices decide to do, I would

recommend that they create and provide opportunities for students when they come back

from their experiences to engage with their experiences by talking about them.

Limitations

There were a few limitations in this study. First, the minimum sample size

requirements for constructing a new scale are 200, and the final size was 158. Even

though this sample size is not ideal, it was duplicated twice for confirmatory factor

analysis purposes for scale validation. Tabachnick and Fiddell (2007) and Pallant (2007)

support this step if a moderate size is acquired, like in the current study. However,

participants from 38 universities from around the United States responded to the survey,

so it is a fairly representative sample. Second, the amount of time to conduct this study

was minimal. If this was conducted over a number of years to track a specific

organization, results could have provided more information from more participants. Pre

and post-testing would have provided more insight into how adjusting back into the

United States is for the participants. Third, not all participants studied abroad for at least

four months or more and within the past two years, so those two variables could impact

the results of this study. Since this survey was based on recall, those that studied abroad

longer than two years ago would find it more difficult to recall on those experiences.

Additionally, those that did not study abroad for at least four months or more may not

have had enough time to fully settle in the host culture, making readjusting back into the

United States easier. Fourth, the study was largely focused on recalling experiences.

Gathering information from the participants before and after their experiences would

have provided more longitudinal results, but that was not feasible for the current study. It

would be beneficial to gather impressions before and after the experience to enrich the

data and results.

Future Directions

First, since the current study conflicted with previous research on extraversion

and international travel and studies, it may be useful to conduct research on the impact of

globalization and extraversion. Looking at how social networking sites, email, and

Skype help deal with struggles in the study abroad experience while it is happening may

influence the way study abroad students talk about the experience when returning. This

accessibility to more avenues of communication could help provide more insight on how

study abroad students talk about their experiences and how it affects reentry shock.

Second, investigating the interaction amongst study abroad participants and how

they communicate with one another about similar experiences could expand the

interpersonal facet of this area of research. While interaction with friends and family is

important, family and friends may not have had similar experiences of being abroad.

Thus, investigating how individuals with similar experiences interact with one another

and how that communication influences the reentry process would be important to

investigate. Since friends and family do not have the same conversational currency as

study abroad participants and vice versa, the topics of discussion may impact reentry

shock and thus, need to be looked at. Investigating the quality of social support between

friends and family would be of most interest since quantity would not necessarily help to get deeper into feelings and comprehension.

Third, a study involving study abroad participants that specifically studied in more culturally distant countries than the United States might provide more nuanced insight into discussing experiences when reentering the United States and comprehending the experience abroad. Comparing one group of study abroad students that studied in places such as Western Europe, Australia, and New Zealand might be significantly different than a group of students who studied in places such as India, Kenya, or Ecuador (for examples) since the latter are third world countries and speak different languages and have different social, economic, and educational structures. Comparing the two groups from one organization would provide more insight into the cultural distance factor.

Additionally, a study looking at one particular organization and how the training and organizational support affects the reentry process would be helpful in determining if an organizational factor has influence on the reentry process by conducting pre and post tests to test participants' perceptions. By gathering impressions before and after the experience and comparing it to the support received by the organization, this information could be very useful in study abroad offices to determine what the focus of the resources should be to support the participants. If organizational support is not a factor, then it could be ruled out completely and resources could be directed in other areas.

Finally, the new Multifaceted Reentry Shock Scale could be replicated in future studies to further validate it and test its reliability. A larger sample size could help reinforce model fit and the replication of studies (especially with newly constructed scales) helps to expand the reliability and validity of a new measure to see if other

populations obtain similar results to the current study. This scale can also be helpful for study abroad offices to determine which of the three dimensions is most important to various groups of returning students.

Conclusion

This study provides helpful insight to what is important to study abroad participants when they return to the United States after their experiences. Reframing how we talk about reentry shock and titling it reentry experience could change perceptions about the process overall by including both positive *and* negative aspects of returning. Even though the predicted variables did not have statistically significant outcomes, this study has helped uncover what is important when returning—social support and discussing the experience. Most importantly, interpersonal communication needs to take place more when study abroad students are returning from their experience. That support from social networks will help the individuals deal with a feeling of loss, learning to appreciate other cultures, and to continue on a path of self-improvement and advancement. The utility and beneficial use of communication is limitless during life changing events, especially one as large living in another country for a period of time. I personally have learned a great deal in conducting this study from not only my own study abroad experiences, but the many interconnected facets of starting and finishing something of this size. Without the support and communication from friends, family, loved ones, colleagues, and advisors, I would not have been able to finish and grow from this experience.

Appendices

Appendix A: Open-Ended Survey Questions

<u>Returning Home: A Questionnaire</u>

Thank you for your participation in this study. This study looks at students' study abroad participation in study abroad programs, particularly when students return from their experiences. Please provide answers in as much detail as possible, including specific examples and illustrations of your experiences.

1) Tell me about what it was like coming home from your study abroad experience. Provide examples of what emotions you felt, your expectations, and how your overall transition back to home life was like.

2) What did you find challenging about coming back? Provide some examples of encounters that you particularly found difficult.

3) What did you find easy about coming back? Provide some examples of interactions that were smooth in your transition back home.

4) Did the experience change you? How so? Provide some examples to illustrate.

5) How are your relationships with your family and friends upon return? Were these different than from how they were before you left (either positive or negative)?

6) Describe the quality of communication you had with your friends and family when you came back. Was it what you expected? Why or why not?

7) Tell me about the similarities and differences between your home culture and the host culture. What did you find to be the most difficult to adjust to in terms of the host culture?

8) Describe the preparation of your experience before heading out on your study abroad. Did it help your transition into the host culture? What do you wish you would have known before the experience?

9) Describe any abroad experience you had prior to this study abroad experience. If you had some experience, how did it (or did not) help with your transition into your study abroad as well as returning home?

Age:

Sex:

Race/Ethnic Identity (please be specific):

Country of Study Abroad:

Length of Study Abroad (in months/years):

Year of Study Abroad:

Organization of Study Abroad:

Appendix B: Initial 16-Item Multifaceted Reentry Shock Scale

Dimension 1: Feeling of Loss

 1. When I returned, I had no interest in others that had not studied abroad.

 2. I felt like life did not have as much purpose when I came back to my life in the

United States.

 3. I felt depressed at the thought of coming home.

 4. I felt like I had to pretend to be happy to be back in the United States.

 5. I found myself avoiding friends.

 6. I lost some friends after I came back from my study abroad experience.

Dimension 2: Appreciation for Other Cultures

 7. I now see the world in a different light.

 8. I now have more respect for others living in countries outside of the United States.

 9. I am now more understanding and compassionate of problems that occur outside of

the United States.

10. My study abroad experience expanded my worldview.

11. I realized how small and interconnected the world is because of my study abroad

experience.

Dimension 3: Self-Improvement and Advancement

12. After my study abroad experience, I realized what I wanted out of life.

13. I now have goals that I want to accomplish due to the inspiration of study abroad.

14. I had a stronger bond with my family members when I returned home.

15. I was able to understand the full context of conversations when I came back.

16. I am now a better listener.

Appendix C: Final Quantitative Measure from Survey Monkey

Reentry Shock, Study Abroad, and Communication

1. Research Consent

Caroline Niesen from the Department of Communication & Journalism is conducting a research study. The purpose of the study is to investigate experiences of study abroad participants and their return home. You are being asked to participate in this study because you have studied abroad in the past.

Your participation will involve answering scale type questions, asking you to rank your responses on a seven-point scale. The survey should take about 15-20 minutes to complete. Your involvement in the study is voluntary, and you may choose not to participate. There are no names or identifying information associated with this survey. The survey includes questions such as asking you to make comparisons between your host country and the United States and other questions ask you to rank how true some statements are about your return home. You can refuse to answer any of the questions at any time. There are no known risks in this study, but some individuals may experience discomfort when answering questions. All data will be kept for online for one year via Survey Monkey, but the researcher will not know who filled out what survey and only the researcher will have the password for the Survey Monkey account.

The findings from this project will provide information for future study abroad participants. If published, results will be presented in summary form only.
If you have any questions about this research project, please feel free to call Caroline Niesen at (505)277-2106. If you have questions regarding your legal rights as a research subject, you may call the UNM Human Research Protections at (505) 272-1129.

By clicking 'NEXT' below, you will be agreeing to participate in the above described research study. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Caroline Niesen
Graduate Student, Instructor
Department of Communication and Journalism
University of New Mexico

2. Personality

Thank you for participating in my study on communication and returning from your study abroad experience. First, I want to emphasize that there are no right or wrong ways to respond to these questions, so I hope you answer honestly. Second, your responses will remain strictly confidential. The only person who will see these surveys is the researcher. Your IP addresses will not be saved and once the data is analyzed, it will be deleted. Third, your answers will be anonymous. I will not know who responded to which survey. Each section has a set of instructions, so please read them carefully.

1. Please rank how the following statements describe you as a person in general.

	Not at all like me	Slightly like me	Moderately like me	Like me	Somewhat like me	Very like me	Extremely like me
I am a talkative person.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I am rather lively.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I can easily get some life into a rather dull party.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I like plenty of action and excitement around me.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I usually take the initiative in making new friends.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

2. Please rank the following items based on how you believe they describe you.

	Not true of me at all	Not true of me	Somewhat untrue me	Undecided	Somewhat true of me	True of me	Very true of me
I find the prospect of change exciting and stimulating.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I think variety is the spice of life.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
New experiences excite me.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I like to think of a new experience in terms of a challenge.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
New experiences can be useful.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I enjoy unexpected events.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I easily adapt to novelty.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

3. Study Abroad vs. Home Environment

1. The following questions ask you to make cultural comparisons between your home environment and your study abroad environment. Please rank each question comparing your study abroad environment with the United States.

	Very different from the U.S.	Different from the U.S.	Somewhat different from the U.S.	Undecided	Somewhat similar to the U.S.	Similar to the U.S.	Very similar to the U.S.
The typical dress worn.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The main language spoken.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The highest level of education attained.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The type of food people normally eat.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The mainstream religion.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The standard of living.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The amount of respect paid to the elderly population.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The type of social gatherings.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

4. Returning Home

1. Please rank the following questions based on your experiences returning home to the United States.

	Not true at all	Not true	Somewhat untrue	Undecided	Somewhat true	True	Very true
My study abroad experience expanded my worldview.	⌁	⌁	⌁	⌁	⌁	⌁	⌁
I am now a better listener.	⌁	⌁	⌁	⌁	⌁	⌁	⌁
I had a stronger bond with my family members when I returned home.	⌁	⌁	⌁	⌁	⌁	⌁	⌁
I lost some friends after I came back from my study abroad experience.	⌁	⌁	⌁	⌁	⌁	⌁	⌁
I now see the world in a different light.	⌁	⌁	⌁	⌁	⌁	⌁	⌁
When I returned, I had no interest in others that had not studied abroad.	⌁	⌁	⌁	⌁	⌁	⌁	⌁
After my study abroad experience, I realized what I wanted out of life.	⌁	⌁	⌁	⌁	⌁	⌁	⌁
I was able to understand the full context of conversations when I came back.	⌁	⌁	⌁	⌁	⌁	⌁	⌁
I now have goals that I want to accomplish due to the inspiration of my study abroad experience.	⌁	⌁	⌁	⌁	⌁	⌁	⌁
I felt like life did not have as much purpose when I came back to my life in the United States.	⌁	⌁	⌁	⌁	⌁	⌁	⌁
I now have more respect for others living in countries outside of the United States.	⌁	⌁	⌁	⌁	⌁	⌁	⌁

5. Returning Home Continued

Reentry Shock, Study Abroad, and Communication

1. Please rank the following questions based on your experiences returning home to the United States.

	Not true at all	Not true	Somewhat untrue	Undecided	Somewhat true	True	Very true
I found myself avoiding friends.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I felt like I had to pretend to be happy to be back in the United States.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I felt depressed at the thought of coming home.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I am now more understanding and compassionate of problems that occur outside of the United States.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I realized how small and interconnected the world is because of my study abroad experience.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
My friends and I have grown in separate directions since I have returned.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
When I returned home I generally felt alienated.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I miss the friends that I made in the host culture.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I miss the foreign culture where I stayed.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
When I returned home I felt really depressed.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I had difficulty adjusting to my home culture after returning from abroad.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

6. Social Support

1. People sometimes look to others for companionship, assistance or other types of support while transitioning back into life in the United States. How often was each of the following kinds of support available to you if you needed it during your time of transition back to the U. S.?

	None of the time	Seldom	Sporadic	Undecided	On occasion	Often	All of the time
Someone you can count on to listen to you when you need to talk.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Someone to give you good advice about a crisis.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Someone to give you information to help you understand a situation.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Someone to confide in or talk to about yourself or your problems.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Someone whose advice you really want.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Someone to share your private worries and fears with.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Someone to turn to for suggestions about how to deal with a personal problem.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Someone who understands your problems.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

7. Communication Post-Abroad

Reentry Shock, Study Abroad, and Communication

1. The following items describe how people communicate in various situations after your return from your study abroad. Choose the number from the following responses that best describes how you felt while talking to others when you returned from your study abroad experience.

	Not at all	Seldom	Sporadic	Undecided	On occasion	Often	All of the time
I felt tense and nervous.	⌐	⌐	⌐	⌐	⌐	⌐	⌐
While talking, I was afraid of making an embarrassing or silly slip of the tongue.	⌐	⌐	⌐	⌐	⌐	⌐	⌐
I worried about what others thought of me.	⌐	⌐	⌐	⌐	⌐	⌐	⌐
I felt ill at ease using gestures when I spoke.	⌐	⌐	⌐	⌐	⌐	⌐	⌐
I could not think clearly when I spoke.	⌐	⌐	⌐	⌐	⌐	⌐	⌐
My body felt tense and stiff while I was talking.	⌐	⌐	⌐	⌐	⌐	⌐	⌐
My words became confused and jumbled when I was speaking.	⌐	⌐	⌐	⌐	⌐	⌐	⌐

8. Demographics

1. Please respond to as much of the following demographic information as you feel comfortable.

Age:

Sex:

Race/Ethnic Identity (please be specific):

University You Attend:

Country of Study Abroad:

Year of Study Abroad (e.g., 2007, 2008 or 2009)

Length of Study Abroad (in months/years):

9. Thank You!

Thank you for your participation in this study. Your input could help to improve study abroad experiences for students in the future!

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