

**Bryant Abroad: Comparing and Contrasting  
the impact of the SIE and Traditional Semester**

**Abroad**

The Honors Program

Senior Capstone Project

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## **ABSTRACT**

Bryant University is a global institution that provides a wealth of international opportunities for its students and faculty. The mission statement of the University is “To educate and inspire students to discover their passion and become innovative leaders of character around the world.” The Study Abroad (SA) programs the University offers are growing and allow students to explore the world outside of their traditional classroom. Bryant encourages global knowledge and SA is a means through which that can be achieved. By taking the Bryant mission statement and studying how those who go abroad and those who do not go abroad find themselves aligned with it, the value of SA can be described in greater terms for Bryant. Furthermore, the various programs Bryant has to offer allow different experiences for its students. Identifying and analyzing the differences in those who participate in the Sophomore International Experience (SIE), those who study abroad for an entire semester, and those who stay at Bryant with quantitative and qualitative measures allows for a more holistic understanding of the experiences. Overall, it was found that the higher level of international education (participation in available abroad programs) a student receives at Bryant the more they are aligned with the mission statement. Additionally, the more international education, the higher a student’s motivational cultural intelligence.

**Keywords:** study abroad, international education, cultural intelligence

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Novelist Wendell Berry once said, “Nobody can discover the world for somebody else. Only when we discover it for ourselves does it become common ground and a common bond and we cease to be alone.” This quote embodies the encouragement to travel and explore the world for yourself. The world does not come to you; you have to seek it out. Study abroad programs of any kind can provide a wealth of international knowledge for students. This Senior Honors Capstone is a traditional research project that concerns the Study Abroad (SA) experience and its impact on the individual.

More specifically, this project investigates how going abroad influences the Bryant student and how the programs that Bryant University offers, the Sophomore International Experience (SIE) and the traditional semester abroad, impact the individual differently. The effects of these experiences on the remainder of the participants’ time at Bryant and how they overall changed the individual were considered. Three aspects of individual growth was measured: academic growth, mainly concerning second language skills, personal growth and social growth. Personal growth was measured on the General Self-Efficacy Scale (GSE), which identifies an individual’s confidence in performing various tasks. Social growth was measured on the Motivational Cultural Intelligence Scale (MCI), which identifies an individual’s interest in interacting with other cultures and their perceived confidence in doing so. Contemporary researchers have identified these outcomes when evaluating various topics in the SA field.

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In order to study these changes, students who participated in the SIE program, those who studied abroad for an entire semester, as well as those who had no form of international education were compared to examine the variation in outcomes. There are obvious differences with these programs that contribute to potential varied outcomes. The SIE is a two-week, faculty-led program that follows a somewhat strict schedule and involves supervision. This is in opposition to the semester abroad, in which students are in country for up to six months, completely free to spend their time however they choose.

I chose to pursue this topic to study because I have participated in both the SIE to Argentina and Chile, and the semester abroad program in Florence, Italy. I believe both programs have promoted an immense amount of growth for me as an individual. They also have led to a deep appreciation for international education. SA has the ability to take learning far outside of the classroom and can lead to the development of skills that simply cannot be taught in a classroom. Personally, I recognize how my experiences abroad have expanded my worldview and cultivated relationships that I believe will last far into the future, both at Bryant and from other universities throughout the country. By researching the SA experience further, I understand deeper its transformative power, beyond my own experience.

This topic is important to investigate due to the recent trend of globalization and emphasis on international knowledge. Global events have impact whether they happen domestically or half way around the world. This research highlights the benefits of SA in the present social and

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political climate. First, SA is a relatively attainable option in which students can acquire first hand international learning. While there are certain barriers to study abroad, such as financial limitations or athletic and academic restrictions, it is typically the easiest way for college-aged individuals to access international experience. This research may motivate institutions to provide options that lessen these barriers. Next, by examining the specific impact SA has on Bryant students, the University could better position the goals of its different programs. In its 2014-2015 survey, the Institute of International Education ranked Bryant number seven for study abroad participation among U.S. Master's universities (Bhandari & Farrugia). Bryant has seen a rapid growth of participation in abroad programs. In the last decade, there has been a 161% increase in Bryant students participating in semester abroad programs and in the last five years there has been a 28% increase in students participating in a SIE program. Given these figures, it is worth examining what is motivating these students to go abroad and what they get out of it as opposed to their peers who do not go abroad. Furthermore, considering our Bryant mission statement is to "educate and inspire students to discover their passion and become innovative leaders of character around the world," an increase in understanding of the impacts of SA can give depth to those words. This could help to recruit students to the university and attract more students to go abroad. Lastly, the research discusses some of the positives and negatives of both the SIE and semester abroad programs, which upon further review, could lead to improvements in the future. These improvements could lead to customized programs that would maximize participant satisfaction and improve goal achievement.

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## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### Introduction

The growing interconnectedness and increased desire for world knowledge has resulted in a growing number of students seeking education abroad. Open Doors, the Report on International Education Exchange, outlines recent trends in SA. They report that during the 2014-2015 academic year, there was a three percent increase in students who received academic credit at their home institution from their SA program, totaling 313,415 students (Bhandari & Farrugia 10). Additionally, they point out the increase in short-term programs, defined as eight weeks or less, for the overall rise in students receiving some form of international education. Bryant University can capitalize even more on its expansive SA programs by comprehending the specifics of how its students are uniquely affected by these various experiences.

It is well documented that there is a need for empirical evidence to back up the often personal/anecdotal accounts that are the basis of most study abroad assessment in order to make more informed decisions regarding the programs (Engle & Engle, 2003; McLeod & Wainwright, 2009; McLeod et al, 2015). Recent literature found in educational databases, study abroad trade journals, and additional sources for study abroad professionals, including the Forum on Education Abroad, have identified academic, personal, and social growth as key outcomes for SA programs.

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Background/History

Nobel Peace Prize winners Nicholas Murray Butler, Stephen Duggen, and Elihu Root founded the Institute of International Education in 1919 with the belief in the ability of education to unite people and the intention of fostering education beyond physical borders. Within a few years, the first credited SA program was created at the University of Delaware, in 1923. Open Doors is a report published annually by the Institute of International Education with funding from the U.S.-Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. The report defines short-term SA programs as any period less than eight weeks, mid-length programs as between eight weeks and a full semester (typically fifteen weeks), and long-term programs as a full academic year. The current trends for American SA students include a continued heavy favoritism to destinations in Europe, with Australasia (New Zealand and Australia) emerging. The literature discusses SA in both quantitative and qualitative measures, with qualitative being more common. SA experiences are often easier to discuss than to quantify. Ingraham and Peterson (2004) believe that qualitative data has the unequivocal ability to show a student's growth in maturity and academics, beyond numbers. Statements of support for SA programs have long been circulated from faculty and students alike concerning its ability offer a deeper sense of learning (93). Quantitative studies have increased in the past few years, as there is an increased demand for hard data.



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Review

Motivation to Study Abroad

Understanding the motivations behind students who choose to study abroad is the first step in comprehending how the experience changes them or causes growth. If a student goes abroad for certain reasons and has certain expectations, that can impact how they view the experience.

McLeod and Wainwright (2009) evaluated the impact of both met and unmet expectations on the participant's judgement of their experience. They concluded that students who expected an overwhelming positive experience, but did not work through any initial disappointments by taking risks or getting involved in the culture ultimately ended with negative feelings towards the experience. They also found that many of the participants in their study agreed that a "violation of expectations" was a necessary component that led to an overall positive outcome (69). The notion of getting out of your comfort zone and pushing your boundaries is a large motivator for those who go abroad and seek adventure in a new location/culture.

Stroud (2010) found that the being female, attending school more than 100 miles away from home, and expressing an interest in improving one's understanding of other's cultures and countries had a positive influence on American students' study abroad intention. The study failed however to examine students actual participation in SA programs. Fornerino et al. (2011) did include this in their research as they discussed two theories of motivation and how they relate to SA motivation. They queried whether the goals that drive consumers to choose a certain product or brand over others or consumers' overall values were the basis for study SA intention. The

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ultimate finding was that United States students placed values over goals, with SA motivation driven in large part by: 1) pleasing parents, 2) improving professional and social status, and 3) having fun. They also found main reasons for students who chose not to study abroad to be financial sacrifices and separation from family and friends. The 2013 study by Luo and Jamieson-Drake also looks at participants' intent to study abroad upon enrollment in college and the following successful completion of a program. The findings of the study agree with Stroud that women are more likely than men to intend to study abroad, with 87% greater odds and adds additional demographic factors to the body of knowledge (40). They found that Caucasian students and students of color are more likely to intend to study abroad than Asian-American students and humanities majors are the most likely to intend to study abroad. However, this study also notes that there is a growing number of students who had a study abroad intention upon entering college that never participated in any form of international education. This is an important factor universities should investigate when assessing and marketing various SA programs.

### Length of Program

With the increase in short-term programs, in the 2014-2015 academic year 48% of all study abroad students participated in short-term programs as opposed to 39% in 1994-1995, there became a growing need for literature to examine how the duration spent in country affects the participant (Bhandari & Farrugia 11). The appeal of shorter programs are becoming increasingly evident as more and more students choose to take part in them. As noted by Mapp (2012), these programs are able to provide more flexibility to students who cannot afford to go abroad for a

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longer period because of financial or academic restraints. Furthermore, shorter programs could accommodate student athletes who cannot miss an entire semester on campus or give students increased confidence needed to participate in future, longer term programs. Olson and Lalley (2012) evaluated a first-year, short-term program designed for business and engineering students and found that about half of the students surveyed went on to participate in or expressed interest in participating in future SA programs, however it does not state whether the program would be for longer length of time.

When applying Social Learning Theory to SA, McLeod and Wainwright (2009) argue how individuals with differences in locus of control can derive different benefits from different program lengths. Locus of control refers to the extent to which people see a connection between their actions and what happens to them. Those who are internally controlled recognize this connection, while those who are externally controlled believe that what happens to them is a product of luck, fate, or chance (Rotter, 1954). Studies have shown that those who are internally controlled do better in unstructured situations whereas externally controlled perform better in structured situations. Given this information, it can be concluded that internally controlled individuals would derive greater benefits from a traditional semester abroad and those who are externally controlled would derive greater benefits from a short-term program. If the individual chooses a program length that matches their locus of control, the overall experience and benefits will be greater. At Bryant, this can be crucial when students determine which path they will take for international education.

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Typical short-term SA programs are faculty-led, which can provide a different set of benefits versus the unsupervised semester. Mapp's study discusses the influence of faculty over student activities and learning while abroad. It is proposed that the academic learning is more focused and engaged than in longer programs (Mapp 2012). It was found that even a nine-day trip could produce certain positive changes in undergraduate students, focusing on the Emotional Resistance, Flexibility/Openness, Perceptual Acuity, and Personal Autonomy of the student.

As participation in short-term programs are growing, participation in mid-length programs are holding constant, and participation in long-term programs are decreasing. The Institute of International Education reports that participation in yearlong programs has decreased by 52% since 1960s. It stands to reason that an increased amount of time spent abroad would lead to greater outcomes, as it magnifies the same benefits from short-term programs and can provide additional benefits. Dwyer (2004) examined the effects of program duration for SA on academic attainment, intercultural development, career impact, and personal growth. The data is broken down by those who participated in yearlong, semester, and summer term (6 weeks). She found numerous benefits of long-term programs over short-term. It was found that yearlong students expressed higher confidence in their linguistic abilities as a result of the increased exposure, are twice as likely to cultivate lifelong friendships with locals, are more likely to work for multi-national organizations in the U.S. and get a job overseas, and are more likely to report increased confidence (161). Pedersen (2010) presents contrary findings that state study abroad students did not move along the developmental model of intercultural sensitivity simply from participating. The study compared two groups of study abroad students, the first group received some form of

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intentional intercultural intervention to assist with their processing of their experience and the other did not. It was proposed that this type of facilitation aided the intercultural growth of the first group, while the second group needed longer to realize the effects of the experience (77).

### Outcomes

The nature of SA is to offer students education and experiences that they would not be able to get at their home institution. There is a large amount of literature that discusses how SA creates a variety of outcomes. The outcomes that have the most impact on the individual following the experience concern academic, personal, and social growth. Commenting on the academic component to study abroad, Kamdar and Lewis (2015) offer that most SA programs are not highly regarded for their discipline-specific courses and students typically take courses that are not connected to their major. Wright and Larsen (2012) concur with this and note when they were conducting interviews to gather data, respondents did not highlight the academics as an integral part of their program. The “learning” components focus more on second language skills and personal discovery.

Immersion into a new culture and language should have a positive influence on the proficiency of a second language. Ingraham and Peterson (2004) note that the level of immersion certain programs offer can influence how much the second language skills are developed/strengthened. They emphasize the frequency in which the students need to speak the language of their host country and living with a host family as key variables for honing language skills. Llanes and Botana (2015) evaluated how listening comprehension for a second language was enhanced due

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to short-term SA. A study of college students who participated in a six week SA in Costa Rica found that overall listening comprehension was improved (207). It is discussed how the quality and quantity of the second language use is increased while abroad and this contributes heavily to the increase in skills. The exposure to such a high number of native speakers and the practice an individual gets abroad cannot be replicated at home. Furthermore, the unique experiences students take part in while abroad are the true drivers for growth.

Studying abroad can facilitate deep personal and social growth for its participants. Embracing change and stepping out of your comfort zone are often how SA is marketed on many college campuses; participants view it as a way to throw oneself into the unfamiliar and attempt to learn more about themselves in the process. The students' new surroundings act as a catalyst for growth. Ingraham and Peterson (2004) qualitatively studied this topic and found overwhelming results that showed increased confidence and self-reliance. The multiple components of SA highlight how the students are able to grow. The logistics of travel, the particulars of living on your own, which for most participants is the first time not living in a typical college setting, and the navigation of a new city all contribute to the growth. By evaluating them on the Cross-Cultural Adaptability Inventory (CCAI), Mapp (2012) found the greatest change for study abroad participants to be Emotional Resilience. Emotional Resilience is defined by the authors of the CCAI as "the extent to which a person can regulate his or her emotions, maintain emotional equilibrium in a new or changing environment, and deal with the setbacks and difficult feelings that are a normal part of the cross-cultural experience" (Kelley & Meyers, 1995, p.14). It is not surprising this skill was heightened while abroad, as many things are constantly changing and

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you have to learn to roll with the punches and keep your composure. Additionally, Ingraham and Peterson found that communication skills became necessary to interact with both new people within students' program and with the new culture in which they put themselves.

Increased cultural awareness goes hand in hand with the development of the aforementioned skills. By living and participating in a new culture, you can learn and appreciate the culture in a way that transcends traditional classroom learning. The qualitative reports from Ingraham and Peterson stress this and identify different cultural values individuals learned while abroad, including a slower pace of life, the way Americans are viewed in other countries, and the feeling of being a minority. Olson and Lalley (2012) agree with this notion and pose that study abroad students are able to interact with other cultures better and become more culturally sensitive when compared to their peers who did not go abroad. Understanding these powerful values opens the door to heightened social growth.

#### Post Abroad Studies and Employability

Given the "life-changing" nature of SA, one would imagine that the true impact of a SA experience, no matter the length, should be in how the individual integrates what has been learned into their life. This impact should last far beyond undertaking the actual experience. Students return to their home institutions with new ideas and perspectives that universities should take into consideration. Furthermore, as college is designed with the end goal to prepare a student for a career, international educational experience should not only prepare participants for the prospect of working abroad, but make them more attractive to employers who have

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international components. As Bryant prides itself on the attractiveness of its graduates, the University should place a high importance on their global experiences.

Yale professor Jane Edwards argues that when students go abroad, they return with different skills, knowledge, and perspectives. The way the students learn and process information also has the ability to change. She positions the way that students abroad learn is by viewing the holistic environment as their classroom, constantly being aware of the intricacies of the other culture and language (119). She urges students who return to continue that type of scholastic performance, but she also notes the limitations, as universities are hesitant to foster such learning styles. This notion is supported by Crossman & Clarke (2009) that found students who return from SA believe universities do not take into account the new skills and insights acquired (607). The re-entry process is delicate for SA students, something universities should consider and encourage a commitment to new or different ways of thinking.

The growing interconnectivity of the world means that a majority of businesses will have to adopt an international focus in some form. This emerging trend calls for a new type of college graduate. Companies are now looking for those who possess the skills necessary to compete in the international market. To further study this topic, Australian researchers Crossman & Clarke (2009) focused on the viewpoints of those who have the most stake in the nature of employability: employers, business academics, and students. They qualitatively examined how they perceived a student's involvement in international experience and its effect on



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employability. Business academics reported the increase in international effects on the home market and a graduate's ability to handle that situation as an important reason for foreign experience leading to higher employability. They also found that international experience was highly regarded by employers, making them stand out from other applicants. Additionally, employers valued those graduates with work experience while abroad, as they possessed the ability to conduct business in an intercultural manner (605). Employers also noted a favorability toward an acquisition of an Asian language because of Asia's growing interaction with the rest of the world (607). Lacking from the study was the indication of how international experience affected long-term job performance.

### Conclusions

A comprehensive review of the recent SA literature highlights the importance of these programs and the numerous benefits for the participants. Among other things, there is some debate on the importance of program length in deriving valuable benefits from SA. By examining the difference in the way the 2-week Bryant SIE program compares to a traditional semester abroad in terms of student outcomes, this research aims to offer evidence to determine the length's role. Furthermore, by investigating the academic, personal, and social growth of Bryant students abroad, this research aims to identify the intangible feelings that contribute to SA's transformative nature. Lastly, considering the overarching goal of education is preparation for the professional world, SA can be a differentiator for its participants once they venture into careers. The first-hand experience can give them a greater understanding of the intricacies of the world around them, allowing them to understand the effects of SA on that goal

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## **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

A review of the recent literature concerning the SA field produced several central research questions for this project. This capstone aims to answer the following:

- 1) Does studying abroad in any capacity lead the Bryant student to become more aligned with the Bryant University Mission Statement?
- 2) Given the two different SA programs Bryant has to offer, which program provides more growth in terms of academics, personal, and social?
- 3) How does learning abroad differ from learning in a traditional classroom setting?
- 4) What skills develop or are heightened because of time spent abroad?

Bryant's mission statement is "To educate and inspire students to discover their passion and become innovative leaders of character around the world." SA is an avenue in which students are able to learn in a different way about the world and themselves. During an abroad program, a student may be exposed to unconventional learning, far outside of a classroom. An assessment of this unconventional learning can provide valuable insights. Further, this learning whether in an academic sense or a soft skill sense could lead them to undiscovered passions, undiscovered leadership potential, and an increased willingness to work in different areas of the globe. Bryant University's diverse programs differ on multiple facets. The length, faculty influence, accommodations, and intensity of participation in the culture vary across the semester abroad and SIE. Recent SA literature has suggested that these differences can result in different benefits. By studying how Bryant students are affected, what skills SA highlights, how learning is different abroad, this project attempts to see the impact on a localized scale.

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## **ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

There are few ethical considerations in regards to this research project, but any project that involves human subjects must meet certain criteria to protect them from any type of harm. To ensure this research project was performed ethically, the guidelines of the Bryant University Institutional Review Board (IRB) were followed. Two separate proposals, one for the focus groups and one for the survey were submitted. No research involving human subjects was performed until approval was granted. The proposals and approval forms can be found in Appendix A-D.

The only main area of concern identified when proposing the project to the IRB was the potential to pose risk in the possible recollection of emotional memories. SA can impact the individual in a profound way and by relaying that profound impact, the subjects might have offered personal information about themselves or their time/actions while abroad. Subjects were not probed to recall anything they do not want to but rather invited to offer all opinions or experiences they wished to share. The need for this slight risk was to understand different firsthand accounts of SA. By allowing subjects to share their personal experiences and stories of growth, a deeper understanding into the specifics of the abroad impact was gained.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This project employs traditional research thesis methodology that is both qualitative and quantitative. As the literature described a need for more quantitative data, this project aims to add to the body of knowledge in this field with quantifiable data. However, in order to develop

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an effective quantitative measure, a qualitative assessment of subjects was necessary. The basis of many former studies in the SA field are qualitative in nature, employing focus groups and interviews with various SA stakeholders. This qualitative research allowed subjects to identify key influencers surrounding time spent abroad. This project employed similar strategies.

Qualitative results were analyzed and applied to the development of a quantitative measurement tool.

First, University staff with knowledge of the overall SA process and goals were interviewed to discuss the programs. After processing the interviews, focus groups were conducted. The subjects for these focus groups were obtained through a mix of a convenience and random sample. Participants were obtained through an email sent from the SA Office to those who have participated in their programs as well as through the personal networks of the researcher. Focus groups were conducted in a private room and subjects were divided into groups of four to eight depending on their level of international education and availability. The distinct focus groups consisted of those who participated in both Bryant abroad programs, those who participated in the SIE and did not go abroad for a semester, those who did the semester abroad and not the SIE, and those who did not go abroad at all. The questions asked of each focus group can be found in Appendix A. Additionally, all subjects were asked to sign a consent form before participating in the focus groups, which can also be found in Appendix A.

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The four focus groups were conducted in order to assess how the different groups responded to a variety of topics. These topics mainly focused on the motivation to study abroad or not, how learning differed abroad than at Bryant, and what skills developed because of time spent abroad. The focus groups were designed to encourage discussion stemming from the participants' own experiences, which resulted in a collection of first-hand accounts. When taken together, these accounts show how an abroad experience has a meaningful impact on its participants. Key words and phrases that came up during the different focus groups were monitored and a compilation can be found in Appendix E. This was created using the internet application Wordle, which aggregates a series of words and makes individual words bigger depending on their frequency. Although focus groups have limitations, such as the possibility of groupthink or that it may be difficult to manage, it provided the best vehicle for research on this subject.

A qualitative analysis of the focus groups was performed and that information was used to develop a 27-item survey. The survey can be found in Appendix C. This survey was designed to highlight outcome variations and general abroad impact compared across the four distinct groups of subjects. The survey was developed using Qualtrics and is broken down into seven sections. The first section is the statement of informed consent that is obtained before the participant begins the survey. The second section is used to measure the participant's alignment with the University mission statement. The third section is a self-assessed second language proficiency evaluation. The fourth section is the Schwarzer and Jerusalem General Self-Efficacy Scale. This scale is used to test the different groups on their confidence in performing various tasks. The fifth section is the Ang and Van Dyne Motivational Cultural Intelligence Scale. This scale is

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used to test the different groups on their interest in participating in various other cultures and their confidence in doing so. The sixth section evaluates the level of the participant's international education. The seventh section is used to gather demographic information about the participant.

The survey sample was a mix of convenience and random. The University SA Office distributed the survey through an email to the population of those who participated in at least one of their programs. This population includes only juniors and seniors at the University, as they would have had the opportunity to participate in both programs. The survey was also distributed through emails to the researcher's personal network in order to gain access to those who did not participate in any abroad programs. The survey was completed by 132 Bryant University students. Following data collection, the data was transferred to an Excel spreadsheet in order to be analyzed using SPSS.

In SPSS, we analyzed the statistical differences for three variables: Mission Statement Alignment, GSE, and MCI between the four identified groups. Group 1 (N=22) was our stay at home group, or no abroad experience. Group 2 (N=47) was our only SIE group. Group 3 (N=20) was our only semester abroad group. Group 4 (N=43) was our group who participated in both programs. In order to evaluate GSE and MCI, we checked for internal reliability of the scales by calculating the correlation between the items in the scale. Additionally, we ran analysis of variance (ANOVA) tests for all three of the variables to determine if the group means were

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statistically significantly different and LSD tests, which computed T-tests between each pair of means to determine if they were statistically significantly different. Following the conventional standards, anything less than .05 would be considered significant.

## **QUALITATIVE RESULTS**

Multiple interviews with Ms. Ashley Mathews, an advisor who works in the University SA Office, were held. She provided historical data of program participation, discussed how program offerings are expanding, and how the University SA programs compare to other universities. Additionally, she noted how the office recently changed some policies that affect the current available financial assistance the University provides and the process of working with various program providers. When asked how the University assists those who have financial concerns, Ms. Mathews discussed how Bryant financial aid packages transfer for a student's semester abroad, but had to point to third-party study abroad scholarships for any other type of assistance. However, she highlighted an increase in Direct Partner Programs for semester abroad students that have lower costs. Ms. Mathews also detailed the emergence of a Spring Break SA in which students would be enrolled in a semester-long class that included one week of international education. The students spend the first half of the class learning about the culture and specific aspects of its history, followed by a weeklong immersion into the culture, and finish the second half of the class while debriefing that experience (Mathews). As of now, there has only been one of these courses, History, Law, and the Holocaust. The University course catalog describes the course:

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This course will explore in depth the Holocaust and its impact on the development of international law after 1945. Topics will include anti-Semitism, the rise of Hitler, the Final Solution, minority rights, domestic legal actions against perpetrators, the Nuremberg International Military Tribunal, Allied military courts, and subsequent national and international trials of accused Nazi war criminals. The course concludes with an examination of some of the leading post-Nuremberg topics in international human rights law today, including preemptory norms, transitional justice, hate speech prohibitions, and Holocaust denial.

Students enrolled in this course travelled to the Czech Republic, Germany, and Poland during their weeklong immersion. Although there is currently only the one course, Ms. Mathews confirmed that it would continue to be offered and she hopes to offer similar programs in the future (Mathews). This expansion demonstrates the University's commitment to SA and its belief in its positive influence on students. Furthermore, the SA Office recently performed an analysis of its top five program locations and the current program partners in each location. They identified Australia, England, Ireland, Italy, and Spain as their top five locations and narrowed down the available program partners to those who provide an academic offering that is in line with Bryant's standards (Mathews). Again, this shows how the University is investing in the future of abroad programs.

Professor Andres Ramirez, the head of the International Business (IB) program at the University was also interviewed. The IB program mandates (with a few exceptions) its participants to go



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abroad for a semester, hold an internship position while abroad, and live with a host family.

There are also restrictions on the locations IB students are allowed to study in, mainly smaller cities. The interview focused on how the program designs its abroad components to maximize cultural learning and interaction. He elaborated on how his department reviewed the literature in this field to identify what works and what does not for students abroad. They concluded two important points:

1. Students should experience three facets of the other culture: the student culture, the family culture, and the working culture
2. Students have to be careful to not misuse the freedom and independence while abroad

To ensure students get the most out of their abroad experience, the IB program put the aforementioned policies in place. Professor Ramirez acknowledged that while cultural experiences are available to students in large cities such as Barcelona or Rome, it is easier to stay within a comfort zone of American SA students and different businesses that cater to them. Smaller cities such as Salamanca or Perugia afford a deeper immersion into the true culture. Additionally, by taking classes in country, the student is a part of the student culture and experiences education in different ways. By having an internship in the foreign country, the student sees how the work culture is different from the US. Finally, by living with a host family, the student sees how family dynamics differ in that country. Professor Ramirez and the IB program believe all three of these aspects combine for a deeper appreciation for the culture. In addition to experiencing the culture greater, these policies give the student more structure. If the student has an internship to report to or a family to eat certain ceremonial meals with, there are

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more opportunities to learn about aspects of the culture. Furthermore, Professor Ramirez noted how IB students and alumni repeatedly point to their semester and internship abroad as differentiators from their peers.

Following those interviews, the focus groups uncovered the interaction that Bryant students have with the abroad process and how it affected them as individuals. A selection of quotes and their corresponding key point can be found in Appendix F. Students who participated in either or both of the programs discussed that a main motivator was the desire to travel and see how various cultures experience different aspects of life. Whether it is on an SIE to China or a semester abroad in France (or both), students are motivated to expand their worldview and step outside of their comfort zone to try something new. The wordle in Appendix E shows how the term ‘different’ was used the most frequently. Students desire to experience different food, a different language, different people, or an overall different culture. This desire was often driven by the prospect of testing themselves and seeing if they could navigate a completely different culture. Those who participated in only the SIE discussed how they wanted to test out if they would enjoy that experience enough to go abroad for an entire semester. Often, participants discussed how they realized two weeks was enough time abroad for them and they did not want to pursue the entire semester program, while others could not because of on-campus obligations. Those who participated in both programs discussed how they had a desire to study abroad for an entire semester early in their Bryant career and that the SIE did reinforce it and encouraged them to pursue it further. Lastly, those who participated in both programs and only the semester abroad discussed how that semester abroad acted as a test period for an international lifestyle post-

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Bryant. Participants discussed how living in a different country for up to six months increased the likelihood that they would live or work abroad at some point in their future.

In terms of academic skills, those who participated in the SIE discussed how they believe there could have been more of an academic component in the classes leading up to the two-week cultural immersion. While they did report learning while they were in country for those two weeks, whether it was through company visits or cultural activities (which vary depending on the individual SIE programs), many participants did not feel intellectually challenged by the SIE pre-departure classes. Those who participated in the semester abroad program discussed two main academic takeaways. For those who studied in a country where English was not the primary language, participants reported an increase in their second-language abilities and vocabulary. The constant interaction with native language speakers in all aspects of daily life provided an opportunity to practice it more frequently and to be completely immersed. Second, students who study abroad report the ability to see the concepts they are learning inside the classroom in real time when they step outside into that very culture. Learning is not confined to the classroom, but rather is constant while students are abroad and participants discussed how they would be learning unintentionally. They detailed how their experiences at museums, historical sites, or cultural activities promoted a greater interest and investment in that culture.

In terms of life skills, many of those who participated in the semester abroad program discussed how it was their first time living outside of the traditional college setting and initially had little to

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no immediate support system. This promoted an overall increased sense of independence in participants. They indicated how they were completely in charge of their finances as well as how to spend and balance their time in an exotic environment. Participants discussed how they learned to navigate various countries' transportation systems and learned to schedule themselves and their friends for weekend trips, which is something they would not have been exposed to if they did not go through that experience. Another life skill that was heightened through students' abroad journey was adaptability. Students discussed how with the amount of time spent travelling increased the likelihood that certain plans would not go perfectly and how they would need to cope and figure out alternate solutions.

Furthermore, while abroad, students noted how often they would need to communicate with a variety of people for a variety of needs. Abroad students are often making new friends with other students or locals who provide social support, many of whom come from different lifestyles. Students also noted a need to communicate with locals when they were confused about some aspect of their new country. They discussed that just like the practice of continually using their second-language, the frequency of interacting with all types of people leads to an increased communication skill. Taking all of these heightened skills as well as the ability of the student to look back at how they handled various situations while they were abroad leads to an increased confidence in a student. Students discussed how they frequently point to their time abroad when they have self-doubt and are reminded how they can succeed in the face of uncertainty. Lastly, participants spoke to SA's ability to make a student more open to opportunities. Participants emphasized all of the different choices and possibilities available to the student while abroad,

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whether it is which country to visit next, what the next excursion will be, or what new food to try. They mentioned how being accepting of whatever came their way and training themselves to say yes made them freer to explore many different options. This is a skill that participants believe they will carry with them far beyond Bryant. One of the ways in which participants of any of the abroad programs believe these experiences will set them apart is in their careers. Many of the participants indicated that following their experiences, they included their involvement on their resume. They leverage the aforementioned skills in interviews and showcase how they can be effective at the potential position. Additionally, they highlighted how their time abroad has augmented their ability to have an effective working relationship with a diverse set of people and the value of that skill.

Conducting separate focus groups with the four categories of students allowed the identification of key differences in response to similar questions between those who have had some form of international education and those who have not. One of these findings is the difference in outcomes from internationally focused classes (global politics, cultural studies, international business, etc.) taken abroad and at Bryant. While taking one of these classes abroad, students interact with the subject matter constantly in various forms and they are integrating themselves. This is in opposition to similar classes taken at Bryant, where there is a finite level of exposure. Often times students are taking these classes because they are required to as part of their liberal arts core, not necessarily because they are interested in studying the topic. For many students, the learning stops once they step out of the classroom. However, while abroad, students step out of the classroom and come face-to-face with the history and culture discussed in lectures. In line

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with the literature, those who did not participate in either of Bryant's abroad programs cited financial sacrifices and a hesitation to leave what was comfortable as their main reasons. The students discussed the additional cost to participate in an SIE and the spending money needed for abroad as their deterrents, either because they could not afford it or because they believed that the costs did not outweigh the benefits. Further, they mentioned how they had built a community on the Bryant campus that they did not want to abandon for an entire semester. Another key difference between these groups came when they were asked if they would choose to work or live abroad. Those who participated in at least one abroad program did not hesitate to say yes to the hypothetical opportunity. Many were excited at the prospect of returning to that experience. Those who have had no international education had to consider the opportunity in more detail before giving an answer. They needed more information about the time frame and weighed the pros and cons of such a decision.

## **HYPOTHESES**

The range of topics discussed in the focus groups lead to the development of hypotheses to be tested by a quantitative measure. The hypotheses that were identified are:

H1: Any type of studying abroad leads students to closer align with the University mission statement

H2: The higher the level of international education a student receives, the higher their GSE

H3: The higher the level of international education a student receives, the higher their MCI

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If determined to be true, the value of SA at Bryant can be quantified and justified by empirical evidence.

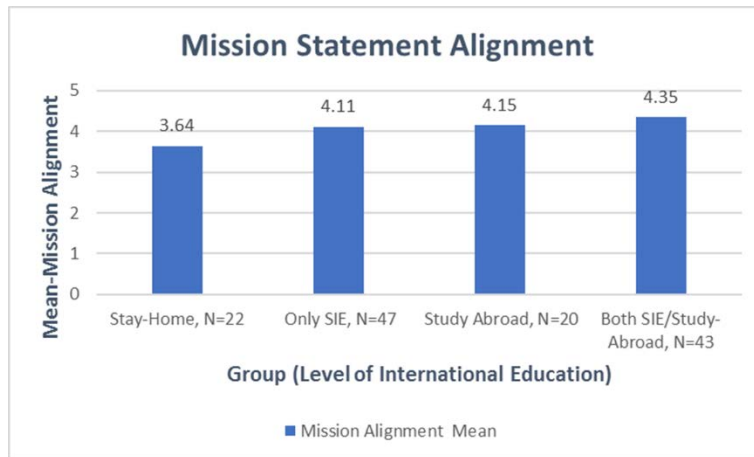
## **QUANTITATIVE RESULTS**

Although survey respondents were asked to self-assess their second-language proficiency, the data gathered was inconclusive. Some of the respondents were not exposed to a second-language and others were exposed in an extremely limited scope.

The survey data for GSE and MCI were first tested for internal reliability. We found that the items correlated strongly, significantly, and positively for both variables, which allowed us to create a single composite scale for each. For GSE, the test produced a Cronbach's alpha of .824 and allowed us to sum the ten items from the scale and calculate a single composite mean for each student. For MCI, the test produced a Cronbach's alpha of .890 and allowed us to sum the five items from the scale and calculate a single composite mean for each student. The SPSS findings for internal reliability can be found in Appendix G.

We then took these composite means as well as the mean for Mission Statement Alignment and ran ANOVA tests for each variable. The ANOVA tests revealed the differences among the means for the four groups to be statistically significant for each variable. The SPSS ANOVA findings can be found in Appendix H. LSD tests were also performed for each variable and those findings are represented in Appendix I.

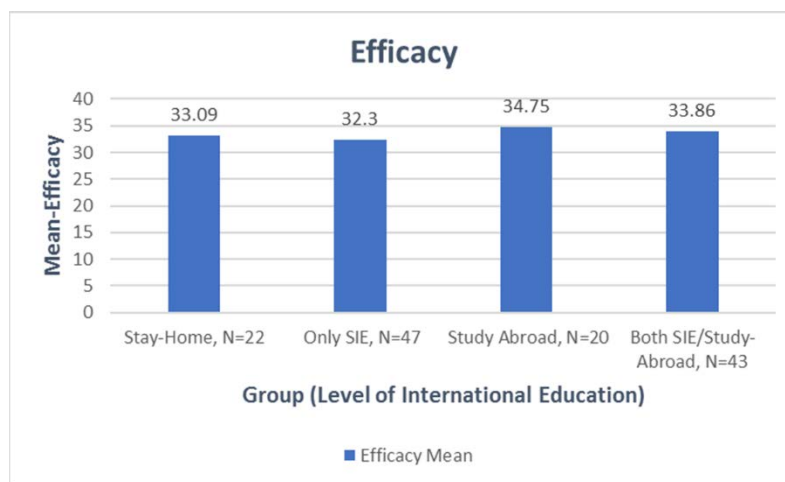
For Mission Statement Alignment, the means move strongly in the predicted direction, as indicated in the graph below, with the Stay-Home mean the lowest mean and the Both mean the highest.



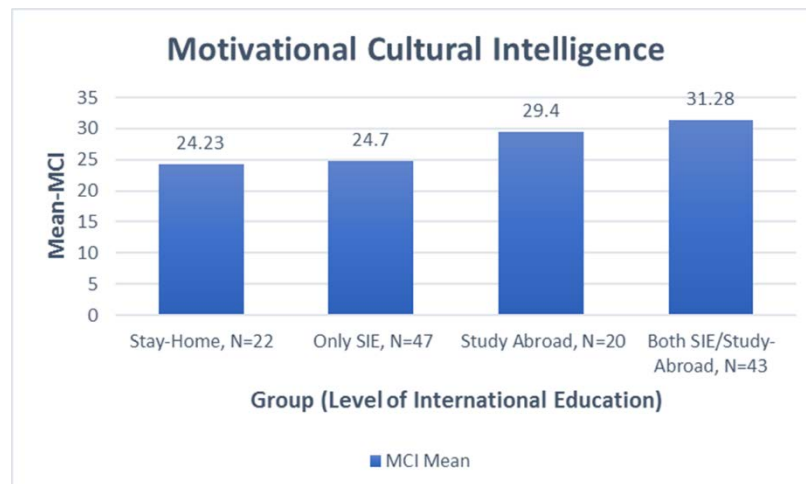
Additionally, the LSD tests show that the Stay-Home mean is statistically significantly different from each group that did receive some form of international education.



For GSE, the means, represented in the graph below, are less conclusive. However, the LSD tests do show that there is a statistical significant difference between the Only SIE mean and the Study Abroad mean as well as the Only SIE mean and the Both mean. While not significant by conventional standards, the Stay-Home mean is lower than the Study Abroad mean and is close to statistical significance.



MCI, represented in the graph below, produced the most significant difference in means. The means move strongly in the predicted direction, with the Stay-Home mean the lowest and the Both mean the highest. The LSD tests show that the Stay-Home mean is statistically significantly different from both the Study Abroad mean and the Both mean. It is also shown that the Only-



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SIE mean is statistically significantly different from both the Study Abroad mean and the Both mean.

## **DISCUSSION & IMPLICATIONS**

As a result of both a qualitative and quantitative analysis, the findings in this study prove H1 and H3 true and H2 partially true. As H1 was proven true, this demonstrates that students who participate in either of the University's abroad programs are more likely to live up to the full potential of a Bryant student. These students are further aligned with the University's goal of producing graduates with an innovative mindset and a global perspective. These abroad opportunities provide a diverse catalog of experiences that can be recalled and leveraged in their personal and professional future. Furthermore, as H3 was proven true, the more international education a student receives while at Bryant, the higher their MCI. With a higher interest and confidence in interacting with various cultures, these graduates are more likely to be prepared for international roles, regardless of their career path, than their peers who did not go abroad for any length of time. As the interconnectedness of the world continues to grow, this will be an increasingly important skill. H2 was proven partially true in terms of GSE and international education. It was found that those who only participated in an SIE had lower GSE than those who participated in a full semester abroad program. Although it was not found statistically significant that those who stayed at Bryant had lower GSE than those who did receive some form of international education. One possible explanation of this is that those who did not go abroad in

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any capacity do not know what they did not experience. They do not know how that experience could have heightened their GSE.

Furthermore, it was found that at Bryant, longer SA programs produce greater results. Those who participated in the semester abroad program had a higher GSE, MCI, were further aligned with the University Mission Statement, and reported higher second language skills than those who only participated in the SIE program. This highlights the living versus vacationing aspect between the semester abroad and the SIE. When a student participates in the semester abroad, he/she is in country for up to six months, living in an apartment or with a host family, and performing all tasks that come with daily life (cooking, cleaning, shopping, etc.). The student becomes an active participant in the culture of their abroad location. This is in opposition to those who only participate in the SIE. During the two-week immersion, students stay in hotels, go out to restaurants for every meal, and follow a fairly structured schedule. This does not allow students to encounter the daily minutia of life in that culture, but instead compels them to act as tourists. The lower GSE of those who choose to only participate in this program as well as their stated desire to not participate in a semester-long abroad experience indicates they might be less independent than those who do. This research also suggests that the academic component of the SIE program could be improved. This could be one way in which a shorter term SA could have as much of an impact as longer programs, adding quality to overcome for the lack of quantity.

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A main deterrent of those who did not seek any international education at Bryant was the financial concerns. This is well-documented in the literature and a complaint heard by the University SA Office regularly. The office is aware of these concerns and have taken steps to decrease that burden. The office is continuing to increase its availability of Direct Partner Programs, which have lower overall fees than regular Program Providers. Additionally, the University is attempting to assist those who have financial need and wish to study abroad. The Class of 2018 is leaving behind a senior class gift that will be an endowed scholarship for a student who wishes to go abroad or participate in an SIE and demonstrates financial need.

Lastly, the university should continue its dedication to and expansion of its abroad programs. This research shows that students are taking away valuable life lessons from their time spent abroad that are not able to be taught in Smithfield, Rhode Island. With the introduction of the new Spring Break Course, a continued evolution of SIE locations and programs (SIE South Africa was introduced last academic year), and a continued evaluation of semester abroad programs to ensure they meet Bryant's standards, the opportunities are endless. Students will continue to experience the unique and life-changing nature that international education and SA have to offer.

### **SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

Future research in this field is recommended that can improve and further this study's findings.

A pre and post-test for those who participate in an SIE or go abroad for a semester can be

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performed in order to see a change within the same subject as opposed to different groups of subjects. That study could be used to determine if these experiences are the true cause of the present study's findings and are not a result of different individuals self-selecting into these programs based on their natural tendencies to be efficacious or interested in other cultures.

Furthermore, research can be conducted to expand this study to alumni. A collaboration with the Alumni Engagement Office and the SA Office could produce a similar study to evaluate how SA alumni and non-SA alumni differ on similar scales. Being farther removed from the experiences, these alumni can speak more about their impact, both personally and professionally. This study could also examine how many alumni are working in international or internationally focused roles and how their SA experience contributed to attaining them. Second-language skills could have been better evaluated in this study to provide conclusive results. An administered proficiency test that is not self-assessed may have produced more fruitful results. Finally, a use of a completely random sample could further improve the quality of this study and the results.

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**APPENDICES**

Appendix A (IRB Proposal Form-Focus Groups)

**Proposal to IRB for Research Involving Human Subjects**

Name(s) of Investigators \_\_\_\_\_ Matthew Raggi and John Dietrich \_\_\_\_\_

Title of Research Project \_\_\_\_\_ Bryant Abroad: Comparing and Contrasting the impact of the SIE and  
the Traditional Semester \_\_\_\_\_ Abroad \_\_\_\_\_

Anticipated Start and End Dates of Experiments September 2017-April 2018

**Basic Level Review**

To be considered at the **Basic Level**, the study must not involve children or adults unable to give consent, must not place subjects at more than minimal risk, and must fit one of the following categories (check all that apply). See Section V for description of each category.

- Normal educational practices
- Educational testing
- Survey/interview procedures
- Observation of behavior without intervention
- Use of archival data
- Evaluation of Federal research and programs
- Consumer acceptance studies

*Risk Assessment*

Indicate with a check if any of the following risks are involved:

	Deception as part of the experimental procedure? If yes, the proposal must include a description of the deception and the method of “debriefing” after the experiment.
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X	Any probing of information which a subject might consider to be personal or sensitive?
	The presentation to the subject of any materials they might find to be offensive, threatening, or degrading?
	Possible compromise of privacy of participant or family, including use of personal information and records?
	The administration of physical stimuli other than auditory or visual stimuli associated with normal activities?
	Deprivation of physiological requirements such as nutrition or sleep?
	Manipulation of psychological and/or social variables such as sensory deprivation, social isolation, psychological stress?
	Physical exertion beyond a level that is moderate for the participant?
	Exposure to drugs, chemicals, or hazardous agents?

Any other situations likely to pose risk? Please identify below:

The only area that has the potential to pose risk would be in the possible recollection of emotional memories. I believe study abroad impacts the individual in a profound way and by relaying that profound impact, the subjects might offer personal information about themselves or their time/actions while abroad. I will not be probing the subjects to recall anything they do not want to but will invite all opinions or experiences subjects wish to share.

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Explain the need for any risks for the participants, that is, how they are required for successful completion of the study:

As previously stated, the impact of study abroad is a driving force behind this research. By allowing subjects to share their personal experiences and stories of growth, I will be able to gain a deeper

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understanding into the specifics of the impact. This will allow me to put forth a survey that will assess the topic on a much wider scale. I will submit a second proposal to the IRB prior to distributing the survey.

### Project Description

Clearly state the purpose of the study and the area of knowledge it contributes to (or attach document):

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Please see attached

Briefly explain the nature of the experimental procedures and the information to be obtained (or attach document). If students are performing the research, indicate that and describe their activities.

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This is student research for an Honors Capstone. Please see attached and focus group questions can be found in Appendix 1.

Explain measures taken to assure anonymity and confidentiality of the information:

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In my report, focus group discussions will not be linked to any specific individual and all demographic information collected will only be discussed with those involved in the research process. Surveys will be distributed electronically and results will be confidential.

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### Participant Description

Describe the approximate number and range of ages of participants in this study:

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18-34

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Describe the criteria for selecting participants:

Participants will be selected based on participation in a study abroad program or lack of participation in any form of study abroad.

Describe any inducements for subjects to participate (check all that apply):



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	Extra credit in a course
	Money. If yes, give approximate value:
	Raffle or other type of contest.
	Other (please specify):

*Informed Consent*

How and when is informed consent obtained from the participants? Indicate any forms used.

Informed consent will be obtained before focus group sessions and an electronic consent form will be included with the survey. Consent form is attached

If deception is part of the procedure, explain the deception and describe when and how debriefing is conducted.

N/A

Any other concerns or further comments?

N/A

*Appendix 1*

Focus Group Questions

Background demographic information asked of all groups:

Name

Age

Gender

---

Year

Major

Minor

Abroad Location(s)

Focus Group 1-Study Abroad and SIE

Question 1) Did you take any language classes before going abroad?

Question 2) Did you take any internationally focused courses prior to studying abroad or participating in the SIE and do you currently or plan to take any?

Question 3) What motivated you to decide to study abroad, either the SIE or semester?

Question 4) Did you have any preconceived notions before going abroad? Were they met?

Question 5) Did you plan to go abroad for a semester before participating in the SIE, if not explain how the SIE influenced your decision?

Question 6) Through your abroad experiences, do you believe you have gained academic skills?

Question 7) Do you believe these skills have helped you back at Bryant?

Question 8) Do you believe those skills will help you in your professional career?

Question 9) Through your abroad experiences, do you believe you have gained general life skills?

Question 10) Do you believe these skills have helped you back at Bryant?

Question 11) Do you believe those skills will help you in your professional career?

Question 12) Which program did you like better and why?

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Question 13) Did you seek out cultural activities while you were abroad that were not prearranged for you?

Question 14) Would you ever work or live abroad? Why or why not?

Question 15) Do you feel comfortable interacting with cultures outside of your own?

Focus Group 2-Study Abroad Semester and not SIE

Question 1) Did you take any language classes before going abroad?

Question 2) Did you take any internationally focused courses prior to studying abroad and do you currently or plan to take any?

Question 3) What motivated you to decide to study abroad?

Question 4) Did you have any preconceived notions before going abroad? Were they met?

Question 5) Through your abroad experience, do you believe you have gained academic skills?

Question 6) Do you believe that those skills have helped you back at Bryant?

Question 7) Do you believe those skills will help you in your professional career?

Question 8) Through your abroad experience, do you believe you have gained general life skills?

Question 9) Do you believe those skills have helped you back at Bryant?

Question 10) Do you believe those skills will help you in your professional career?

Question 11) Did you seek out cultural activities while you were abroad that were not prearranged for you?

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Question 12) Why did you not participate in the SIE program?

Question 13) Would you ever work or live abroad? Why or why not?

Question 14) Do you feel comfortable interacting with cultures outside of your own?

Focus Group 3-SIE only

Question 1) Did you take any language classes before participating in SIE?

Question 2) Did you take any internationally focused courses prior to participating in the SIE and do you currently or plan to take any?

Question 3) What motivated you to decide to participate in the SIE?

Question 4) Did you have any preconceived notions before the program? Were they met?

Question 5) As a result of your SIE, do you believe you have gained academic skills?

Question 6) Do you believe those skills have helped you back at Bryant?

Question 7) Do you believe those skills will help you in your professional career?

Question 8) As a result of your SIE, do you believe you have gained general life skills?

Question 9) Do you believe those skills have helped you back at Bryant?

Question 10) Do you believe those skills will help you in your professional career?

Question 11) Did you seek out cultural activities that were not prearranged for you?

Question 12) Why did you choose to not go abroad for the semester?

Question 13) Would you ever work or live abroad? Why or why not?

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Question 14) Do you feel comfortable interacting with cultures outside of your own?

Focus Group 4-No Abroad

Question 1) Did you take any internationally focused courses during your Bryant career and do you currently or plan to take any?

Question 2) Did you/ do you take any language classes?

Question 3) Why did you choose not to participate in either of Bryant's abroad programs?

Question 4) Do you seek out cultural activities that have to do with outside cultures?

Question 5) Would you ever work or live abroad? Why or why not?

Question 6) Do you feel comfortable interacting with cultures outside of your own?

Question 7) Do you regret not going abroad?

Proposal Attachment:

**Project Description**

The Honors Capstone that I will be undertaking is a traditional research project that concerns the Study Abroad (SA) Experience and its impact on the individual into the future. More specifically, I will be investigating how the programs that Bryant University offers, the Sophomore International Experience (SIE) and the traditional semester abroad, impact the individual. I will be studying the effects of these experiences on the remainder of the participants' time at Bryant and further into their professional careers. I plan on taking into consideration academic growth, mainly concerning second language skills, as well as personal and social growth. I plan to evaluate personal growth in terms of increased communication skills and overall confidence and social growth in terms of increased cultural awareness and ability to interact with different cultures. Contemporary researchers have identified these outcomes when evaluating various topics in the SA field. In order to study this, I will compare and contrast the SIE program with the semester abroad and examine the variation in outcomes, both short-term and long-term.

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### **Research Methodology**

The research methodology that I will employ includes a convenience sample of interviews/focus groups with a variety of subjects. The subjects will be divided into groups of six to eight participants by: those who participated in both Bryant study abroad programs, those who participated in SIE and did not go abroad for a semester, those who completed the semester abroad and not SIE, and those who did not go abroad at all. Focus groups will be held in private rooms. I will use those focus groups and interviews to develop a survey designed to highlight outcome variations. I will submit a second proposal to the IRB prior to distributing the survey.

Consent Form Attachment:

## **Consent Form**

### **1. Statement of purpose**

You are invited to participate in the study Bryant Abroad: Comparing and Contrasting the impact of the SIE and the Traditional Semester Abroad. We hope to learn how length of time spent abroad impacts the individual. You were selected as a possible participant in this study because of your participation or lack thereof in one or more study abroad programs.

### **2. Description, Including Risks and Benefits**

If you decide to participate, I will conduct an experiment involving the following procedures: Hour-long focus group sessions and a follow up electronic survey concerning your participation or lack thereof in study abroad programs. The audio of focus group sessions will be recorded for recollection purposes.

### **3. Confidentiality**

Any information obtained in connection with this study will only be discussed with those involved in the research process and will not be disclosed to the general public in a way that can be traced to you. In any written reports or publications, no participant other than the researchers will be identified, and only anonymous data will be presented. If the data/information derived from this research is requested for further research, I will disclose it after considering the nature of the research project. Anonymity will be maintained in any transfer of data/information.

This consent form, with your signature, will be stored separately and independently from the data collected so that your responses will not be identifiable.

#### **4. Statement that Participation Is Voluntary**

Your participation is totally voluntary, and your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your future relations with Bryant University or its employees in any way. If you decide to participate, you are also free to discontinue participation at any time without affecting such relationships. However, it is requested that you notify the investigator of this.

#### **5. Persons to Contact**

If you have any questions, please contact **Matthew Raggi** [mraggi@bryant.edu]. If you have any additional questions later, I will be happy to answer them. You can have a copy of this form to keep.

#### **6. Signature Indicating Informed Consent**

Please sign below if you have decided to participate. Your signature indicates only that you are at least 18 years of age and have read the information provided above. Your signature does not obligate you to participate, and you may withdraw from the study at any time without consequences.

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature of Participant**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature of Principal Investigator**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

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Appendix B (IRB Approval-Focus Groups)



October, 2017

Matthew Raggi and John Dietrich:

RE: IRB Proposal #2017-1011  
TITLE: Bryant Abroad: Comparing and Contrasting the impact of the SIE and the Traditional Semester Abroad

Dear Matthew and John:

Your proposal, entitled "Bryant Abroad: Comparing and Contrasting the impact of the SIE and the Traditional Semester Abroad" was considered under IRB Guidelines for exemption/expedited review. The IRB Committee of Bryant University approved the proposal October 11, 2017.

Bryant University is strongly committed to adhering to the basic ethical principles related to the conduct of research involving human subjects as set forth in *The Belmont Report: Ethical Principles and Guidelines for the Protection of Human Subjects of Research*. The submission of your proposal to the IRB Committee supports the goals of Bryant University and the IRB Committee and ensures that research involving any members of the Bryant community is in strict accordance with these ethical principles and guidelines.

Thank you for your submission, and good luck with your research.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Yoon sukki (ms)".

Sukki Yoon  
Chair, IRB Committee



Appendix C (IRB Proposal-Survey)

## **Proposal to IRB for Research Involving Human Subjects**

Name(s) of Investigators Matthew Raggi and John Dietrich

Title of Research Project Bryant Abroad: Comparing and Contrasting the impact of the SIE  
and the Traditional Semester Abroad

Anticipated Start and End Dates of Experiments September 2017-April 2018

### **Basic Level Review**

To be considered at the **Basic Level**, the study must not involve children or adults unable to give consent, must not place subjects at more than minimal risk, and must fit one of the following categories (check all that apply). See Section V for description of each category.

- Normal educational practices
- Educational testing
- Survey/interview procedures
- Observation of behavior without intervention
- Use of archival data
- Evaluation of Federal research and programs
- Consumer acceptance studies

### **Risk Assessment**

Indicate with a check if any of the following risks are involved:

	Deception as part of the experimental procedure? If yes, the proposal must include a description of the deception and the method of “debriefing” after the experiment.
	Any probing of information which a subject might consider to be personal or sensitive?
	The presentation to the subject of any materials they might find to be offensive, threatening, or degrading?
	Possible compromise of privacy of participant or family, including use of personal information and records?
	The administration of physical stimuli other than auditory or visual stimuli associated with normal activities?
	Deprivation of physiological requirements such as nutrition or sleep?

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	Manipulation of psychological and/or social variables such as sensory deprivation, social isolation, psychological stress?
	Physical exertion beyond a level that is moderate for the participant?
	Exposure to drugs, chemicals, or hazardous agents?

Any other situations likely to pose risk? Please identify below:

No

Explain the need for any risks for the participants, that is, how they are required for successful completion of the study:

As previously stated, the impact of study abroad is a driving force behind this research. I plan on gather quantitative data in order to support my hypotheses. This will allow me to put forth assess the topic on a wider scale.

### **Project Description**

Clearly state the purpose of the study and the area of knowledge it contributes to (or attach document):

Please see attached

Briefly explain the nature of the experimental procedures and the information to be obtained (or attach document). If students are performing the research, indicate that and describe their activities.

This is student research for an Honors Capstone. Please see attached and survey questions can be found in Appendix 2.

Explain measures taken to assure anonymity and confidentiality of the information:

In my report, survey results will not be linked to any specific individual and all demographic information collected will only be discussed with those involved in the research process. Surveys will be distributed electronically and results will be confidential.

### **Participant Description**

Describe the approximate number and range of ages of participants in this study:

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Describe the criteria for selecting participants:

Participants will be selected based on participation in a study abroad program or lack of participation in any form of study abroad.

Describe any inducements for subjects to participate (check all that apply):

<input type="checkbox"/>	Extra credit in a course
<input type="checkbox"/>	Money. If yes, give approximate value:
<input type="checkbox"/>	Raffle or other type of contest.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (please specify):

### **Informed Consent**

How and when is informed consent obtained from the participants? Indicate any forms used.

Informed consent will be obtained before the survey is administered as the first panel

seen. Statement of consent is as follows:

“Welcome!

We are interested in understanding how study abroad experiences impact the Bryant University student. You will be presented with information relevant to the effect of international education and asked to answer some questions about it. Please be assured that your responses will be kept completely confidential.

The study should take you around 10 minutes to complete. Your participation in this research is voluntary. You have the right to withdraw at any point during the study, for any reason, and without any prejudice. If you would like to contact the Principal Investigator in the study to discuss this research, please e-mail Matthew Raggi at [mraggi@bryant.edu](mailto:mraggi@bryant.edu).

By clicking the button below, you acknowledge that your participation in the study is

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voluntary, you are 18 years of age, and that you are aware that you may choose to terminate your participation in the study at any time and for any reason.

Please note that this survey will be best displayed on a laptop or desktop computer. Some features may be less compatible for use on a mobile device.”

If deception is part of the procedure, explain the deception and describe when and how debriefing is conducted.

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N/A

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Any other concerns or further comments?

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N/A

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## **Appendix 2**

Q1

Welcome!

We are interested in understanding how study abroad experiences impact the Bryant University student. You will be presented with information relevant to the effect of international education and asked to answer some questions about it. Please be assured that your responses will be kept completely confidential.

The study should take you around 10 minutes to complete. Your participation in this research is voluntary. You have the right to withdraw at any point during the study, for any reason, and without any prejudice. If you would like to contact the Principal Investigator in the study to discuss this research, please e-mail Matthew Raggi at [mraggi@bryant.edu](mailto:mraggi@bryant.edu).

By clicking the button below, you acknowledge that your participation in the study is voluntary, you are 18 years of age, and that you are aware that you may choose to terminate your participation in the study at any time and for any reason.

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Please note that this survey will be best displayed on a laptop or desktop computer. Some features may be less compatible for use on a mobile device.

I consent, begin the study

I do not consent, I do not wish to participate

Q2

At this point in your academic career, how closely do you align with the Bryant University mission statement: "To educate and inspire students to discover their passion and become innovative leaders of character around the world."

Strongly Disagree    Disagree    Neutral    Agree    Strongly Agree

Q3

Did you study abroad or participate in an SIE that exposed you to a language other than English?

Yes

No

Q4

Have you ever formally studied a language other than English?

Yes

No

Q5

Please rate your proficiency in the following languages you may have been exposed to:

(Scale of 0-100)

Spanish

Italian

French

Chinese

Q6-15 Evaluated on a 4 point scale (Not true at all, Hardly true, moderately true, exactly true)

Q6

I can always manage to solve difficult problems if I try hard enough

Q7

If someone opposes me, I can find the means and ways to get what I want.

Q8

It is easy for me to stick to my aims and accomplish my goals.

Q9

I am confident that I could deal efficiently with unexpected events.

---

Q10

Thanks to my resourcefulness, I know how to handle unforeseen situations.

Q11

I can solve most problems if I invest the necessary effort.

Q12

I can remain calm when facing difficulties because I can rely on my coping abilities.

Q13

When I am confronted with a problem, I can usually find several solutions.

Q14

If I am in trouble, I can usually think of a solution

Q15

I can usually handle whatever comes my way.

Q16-Q20 evaluated on a 7 point scale

Q16

I enjoy interacting with people from different cultures.

Strongly Disagree      Strongly Agree

Q17

I am confident that I can socialize with locals in a culture that is unfamiliar to me.

Strongly Disagree      Strongly Agree

Q18

I am sure I can deal with the stresses of adjusting to a culture that is new to me.

Strongly Disagree      Strongly Agree

Q19

I enjoy living in cultures that are unfamiliar to me.

Strongly Disagree      Strongly Agree

Q20

I am confident that I can get accustomed to the shopping conditions in a different culture.

Strongly Disagree      Strongly Agree

Q21

Please indicate your level of International Education while at Bryant (Select all that apply)

Study Abroad-full semester

Sophomore International Experience

No International Education

Q22

Please indicate your abroad or SIE location:

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Please describe any aspect(s) of your abroad experience(s) that has had a significant impact on you as an individual:

Q23

What is your sex?

Male

Female

Q24

What is your class year?

2018

2019

Q25

What is your primary major/concentration?

Applied Psychology

Chinese

Communication

Economics/Applied Economics

Global Studies

History

LCS

Spanish

Politics & Law

Sociology

Actuarial Math

Applied Math & Statistics

Biology/Environmental Science

Accounting

CIS/IT

Entrepreneurship

Finance/ Financial Services

Global Supply Chain

HR Management

Management

Marketing

International Business

Q26

What is your approximate GPA?

3.6-4.0

3.2-3.59

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2.8-3.19  
2.4-2.79  
2.0-2.39  
Below 2.0

Proposal Attachment:

### **Project Description**

The Honors Capstone that I will be undertaking is a traditional research project that concerns the Study Abroad (SA) Experience and its impact on the individual into the future. More specifically, I will be investigating how the programs that Bryant University offers, the Sophomore International Experience (SIE) and the traditional semester abroad, impact the individual. I will be studying the effects of these experiences on the remainder of the participants' time at Bryant and further into their professional careers. I plan on taking into consideration academic growth, mainly concerning second language skills, as well as personal and social growth. I plan to evaluate personal growth in terms of increased communication skills and overall confidence and social growth in terms of increased cultural awareness and ability to interact with different cultures. Contemporary researchers have identified these outcomes when evaluating various topics in the SA field. In order to study this, I will compare and contrast the SIE program with the semester abroad and examine the variation in outcomes, both short-term and long-term.

### **Research Methodology**

The research methodology that I will employ includes a survey of a convenience sample of Bryant students who did and did not go abroad in any capacity. The subjects will be asked about their overall self-esteem, language proficiency, intercultural competency in relation to their international education exposure. Survey is designed through Qualtrics and the goal is to highlight outcome variations. Survey will be distributed electronically.



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Appendix D (IRB Approval-Survey)



April, 2018

Matthew Raggi and John Dietrich:

RE: IRB Proposal #2018-0404  
TITLE: Bryant Abroad: Comparing and Contrasting the impact of the SIE and the Traditional Semester Abroad

Dear Matthew and John:

Your proposal, entitled "Bryant Abroad: Comparing and Contrasting the impact of the SIE and the Traditional Semester Abroad" was considered under IRB Guidelines for exemption/expedited review. The IRB Committee of Bryant University approved the proposal April 4, 2018.

Bryant University is strongly committed to adhering to the basic ethical principles related to the conduct of research involving human subjects as set forth in *The Belmont Report: Ethical Principles and Guidelines for the Protection of Human Subjects of Research*. The submission of your proposal to the IRB Committee supports the goals of Bryant University and the IRB Committee and ensures that research involving any members of the Bryant community is in strict accordance with these ethical principles and guidelines.

Thank you for your submission, and good luck with your research.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Yoon sukki (no)".

Sukki Yoon  
Chair, IRB Committee



Both Programs	“I never used to read for comprehension, before I studied in France, but now I stay on top of all my readings now that I am back at Bryant”	2019	Growth in Academic skills
Both Programs	“I have a wider Spanish vocabulary after my semester abroad and I have to look up a lot less when doing my Spanish homework”	2018	Growth in Second Language
Both Programs	“I am going into sales after graduation and I think going abroad helped me get my job. All of the hiring managers I interviewed with were impressed at my ability to start conversations with anyone in the world”	2018	Study Abroad’s impact post Bryant
Semester Abroad Only	“Before going abroad, I thought I had to live in Massachusetts after graduation and now I would accept	2018	Study Abroad’s impact on seizing opportunities

	a job offer basically anywhere in the world”		
Semester Abroad Only	“I have been taking French since high school and I really wanted to practice it in its native country”	2018	Motivation to go abroad to gain second-language skills
Semester Abroad Only	“I took an International Business course while abroad and it was interesting because you got to make sense of what you were learning in real world concepts”	2018	Application of abroad courses in real-time
Semester Abroad Only	“The scope of the way I learn and listen to things is so overwhelmingly different after going abroad”	2018	The difference in learning abroad
Semester Abroad Only	“You become aware of how you experience things, influence things, you understand how someone can be brought up a completely different way...you are just more sympathetic”	2018	How study abroad changes your viewpoint

Semester Abroad Only	“[Going abroad] almost makes you a better person, professionally because you learn to have more patience and that is so valuable in a work setting”	2018	How study abroad will help you in your career
Semester Abroad Only	“If I can move and live in another country and survive on my own... you kind of feel like wow I can do whatever I need to because I know I have done it before”	2018	How study abroad increases confidence
Semester Abroad Only	“I would work abroad in a heartbeat”	2018	Desire to work abroad
SIE Only	“I didn’t know if I could go abroad and be away from home for a few months so the SIE was perfect for me...and I realized two weeks was enough”	2018	SIE as a test for abroad
SIE Only	“From an athlete perspective, it was the best of both worlds because I did not have to miss either of my seasons but was still	2018	SIE and its ability to provide flexibility

	able to experience going abroad for a short amount of time”		
SIE Only	“Our pre-departure classes were very easy and I think they only taught us about four words, so I’m not sure I retained anything academic”	2018	SIE coursework can be improved
SIE Only	“My SIE has made me more spontaneous and willing to try new things”	2018	SIE life skills benefits
SIE Only	“I was surprised at how fast I learned to accept and embrace a new culture”	2018	Short-term SA and its ability quickly change an individual
No Abroad	“I think if I had studied abroad in any way in a Spanish speaking country, my Spanish would be so much better”	2018	Regret from not studying abroad
No Abroad	“I couldn’t go abroad for a semester because of playing field hockey and I would’ve done SIE but it was too expensive”	2018	Financial/Athletic restrictions

No Abroad	“I was scared that I would be homesick if I went abroad for a semester”	2018	Hesitation to leave what is comfortable
No Abroad	“I wouldn’t really say I seek out cultural activities, it is not very interesting to me”	2018	Little desire to experience other cultures
No Abroad	“I am pretty rooted here in America in terms of friends and family so I would have to weigh a lot of different factors”	2018	Hesitation to work abroad

Appendix G (Internal Reliability)

GSE

|

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.824	10

```
COMPUTE Efficacy=Q43_1+Q43_2+Q43_2+Q43_4+Q43_5+Q43_6+Q43_7+Q43_8+Q43_9+Q43_10.
EXECUTE.
FREQUENCIES VARIABLES=Efficacy
  /STATISTICS=STDDEV RANGE MINIMUM MAXIMUM MEAN MEDIAN
  /HISTOGRAM NORMAL
  /ORDER=ANALYSIS.
```

MCI

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.890	5

```

COMPUTE MCI=Q16_1+Q17_1+Q17_1+Q19_1+Q20_1.
EXECUTE.
FREQUENCIES VARIABLES=MCI
  /STATISTICS=STDDEV RANGE MINIMUM MAXIMUM MEAN MEDIAN
  /HISTOGRAM NORMAL
  /ORDER=ANALYSIS.
    
```

Appendix H (ANOVA)

Mission Statement Alignment

**ANOVA**

Q2\_1 Mission (Mission, Q2\_1, Bryant Mission Alignment)

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	7.419	3	2.473	<b>5.116</b>	<b>.002</b>
Within Groups	61.876	128	.483		
Total	69.295	131			

GSE

**ANOVA**

Efficacy (Efficacy, Ability to perform different tasks)

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	103.704	3	34.568	<b>2.953</b>	<b>.035</b>
Within Groups	1498.561	128	11.708		
Total	1602.265	131			



MCI

**ANOVA**

MCI (MCI, Motivational Cultural Intelligence)

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1289.787	3	429.929	19.974	.000
Within Groups	2755.145	128	21.525		
Total	4044.932	131			

Appendix I (LSD Tests)

Mission Statement Alignment

**Multiple Comparisons**

Dependent Variable: Q2\_1 Mission (Mission, Q2\_1, Bryant Mission Alignment)

LSD

(I) Group Group (Group, Level of Internat'l Education)	(J) Group Group (Group, Level of Internat'l Education)	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Stay-Home	Only SIE	-.470 <sup>*</sup>	.180	.010	-.83	-.11
	Study Abroad	-.514 <sup>*</sup>	.215	.018	-.94	-.09
	Both SIE/Study-Abroad	-.712 <sup>*</sup>	.182	.000	-1.07	-.35
Only SIE	Stay-Home	.470 <sup>*</sup>	.180	.010	.11	.83
	Study Abroad	-.044	.186	.815	-.41	.32
	Both SIE/Study-Abroad	-.242	.147	.101	-.53	.05
Study Abroad	Stay-Home	.514 <sup>*</sup>	.215	.018	.09	.94
	Only SIE	.044	.186	.815	-.32	.41
	Both SIE/Study-Abroad	-.199	.188	.293	-.57	.17
Both SIE/Study-Abroad	Stay-Home	.712 <sup>*</sup>	.182	.000	.35	1.07
	Only SIE	.242	.147	.101	-.05	.53
	Study Abroad	.199	.188	.293	-.17	.57

\*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

GSE

Multiple Comparisons

Dependent Variable: Efficacy (Efficacy, Ability to perform different tasks)

LSD

(I) Group (Group, Level of Internat'l Education)	(J) Group (Group, Level of Internat'l Education)	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1 Stay-Home	2 Only SIE	.793	.884	.371	-.96	2.54
	3 Study Abroad	-1.659	1.057	.119	-3.75	.43
	4 Both SIE/Study-Abroad	-.770	.897	.392	-2.54	1.01
2 Only SIE	1 Stay-Home	-.793	.884	.371	-2.54	.96
	3 Study Abroad	-2.452*	.913	.008	-4.26	-.64
	4 Both SIE/Study-Abroad	-1.563*	.722	.032	-2.99	-.13
3 Study Abroad	1 Stay-Home	1.659	1.057	.119	-.43	3.75
	2 Only SIE	2.452*	.913	.008	.64	4.26
	4 Both SIE/Study-Abroad	.890	.926	.339	-.94	2.72
4 Both SIE/Study-Abroad	1 Stay-Home	.770	.897	.392	-1.01	2.54
	2 Only SIE	1.563*	.722	.032	.13	2.99
	3 Study Abroad	-.890	.926	.339	-2.72	.94

\*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.



MCI

Multiple Comparisons

Dependent Variable: MCI (MCI, Motivational Cultural Intelligence)

LSD

(I) Group (Group, Level of Internat'l Education)	(J) Group (Group, Level of Internat'l Education)	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1 Stay-Home	2 Only SIE	-.475	1.198	.693	-2.85	1.90
	3 Study Abroad	-5.173*	1.433	.000	-8.01	-2.34
	4 Both SIE/Study-Abroad	-7.052*	1.216	.000	-9.46	-4.65
2 Only SIE	1 Stay-Home	.475	1.198	.693	-1.90	2.85
	3 Study Abroad	-4.698*	1.239	.000	-7.15	-2.25
	4 Both SIE/Study-Abroad	-6.577*	.979	.000	-8.51	-4.64
3 Study Abroad	1 Stay-Home	5.173*	1.433	.000	2.34	8.01
	2 Only SIE	4.698*	1.239	.000	2.25	7.15
	4 Both SIE/Study-Abroad	-1.879	1.256	.137	-4.36	.61
4 Both SIE/Study-Abroad	1 Stay-Home	7.052*	1.216	.000	4.65	9.46
	2 Only SIE	6.577*	.979	.000	4.64	8.51
	3 Study Abroad	1.879	1.256	.137	-.61	4.36

\*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

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