

EXPLORING THE PERCEPTIONS OF STUDY ABROAD AMONG BLACK  
UNDERGRADUATES AT HISTORICALLY BLACK COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

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## ABSTRACT

Dafina Lazarus Stewart, Advisor

International education helps students become more engaged within the United States and abroad. Black undergraduates continue to be underrepresented in study abroad despite two decades of increased enrollment by Black students in higher education in the United States. This study had three purposes: (1) to explore how Black undergraduates attending historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) perceived study abroad programs, (2) to understand how individual and institutional characteristics related to the desire of Black undergraduates at HBCUs to study abroad, and (3) to determine to what degree individual and institutional variables predicted Black undergraduates' desire to participate in study abroad.

A survey research design was utilized to understand the perceptions and characteristics of Black undergraduates attending four HBCUs. Two hundred ninety-eight students responded to the survey during the spring and summer of 2011. Findings indicated that there was a significant relationship between students who initiated discussion about study abroad with their advisor or professor and their desire to study abroad at their current institution. There was a significant relationship between professors who initiated conversations about study abroad with students outside the classroom and the respondents' desire to study abroad. There was a significant relationship between professors who discussed study abroad outside the classroom and respondents' perceptions of study abroad. Students who had interactions with faculty or advisors regarding study abroad were less represented among students who did not desire to study abroad.

Respondents who were born or raised abroad were less likely to desire to study abroad than those that did not report they were born or raised abroad and education majors were more

likely to desire to study abroad than those in other majors. Respondents who initiated discussions about study abroad with their professors were more likely to desire study abroad than those who did not discuss study abroad with their professors and respondents whose advisors discussed academic planning for study abroad were less likely to desire to study abroad than those who reported that their advisor did not discuss academic planning for study abroad. Implications for research and practice in higher education and student affairs are discussed.

In memory  
of my beloved friend, Jason ...  
for your unconditional love and unselfish giving,  
you are the wind beneath my wings and  
I'll continue to soar in your memory.

Jason B. Wright  
12/11/1976-12/8/2008

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## CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

### **Statement of the Problem**

Study abroad has been a component of American higher education for decades. Although study abroad programs have a long tradition at American colleges and universities, the 21st century marked a demand for greater diversity and increased participation in study abroad programming (IIE, 2009b). General participation in study abroad has increased over the years, yet Black students have not participated in study abroad at or even near the rate of their White peers. In addition, there is little research on the state of study abroad at historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs). The majority of research surrounding study abroad and Black undergraduates has mainly focused on Black undergraduates attending predominantly White institutions (PWIs). Black students attending HBCUs may have uniquely different perceptions of study abroad than their peers at non-HBCUs. These perceptions could shape the way educators come to understand and disseminate information for Black undergraduates attending HBCUs to learn about study abroad and potentially participate in study abroad programs at their institution. There is much to learn about the perceptions Black students have in relation to study abroad and the role their institutions play in how they perceive it.

Study abroad is an academic experience which enhances college students' ability to develop international competencies and the skill set to compete in a global society (Carlson, Burn, Useem, & Yachimowicz, 1990). Study abroad sets the stage for students to become more engaged and better prepared to function within the United States and abroad. Although study abroad programs have served the same purpose for decades, the design of study abroad has evolved since World War II (Goodwin & Nacht, 1988). Students have the ability to study abroad in many different formats. Study abroad programs can be "short term (as short as one week) or



longer (up to a full academic year), during which students physically leave the United States to engage in college study, cultural interaction, and more in the host country” (McKeown, 2009, p. 11). Study abroad programs vary not only in length of time abroad but also in location, leadership, and field of study. The diversity of program designs provides students with individualized experiences. Each student approaches and makes sense of his or her experience abroad very differently. McKeown (2009) posited that “study abroad is an activity that challenges students by forcing an intense encounter with diversity; study abroad is replete with stress, anxiety, and intellectual discomfort by deliberately exposing students to alternative environments that require an alternate worldview” (p. 99).

The increase in globalization has contributed to the push for more American campuses to become internationalized beyond the enrollment of international students (Osfield, 2008). Internationalization is the “process by which a university changes the infrastructure or the campus ecology to keep up with the demand for more direct links to higher education outside their own country of origin” (Osfield, 2008, p. 3). Current technology and ease of travel have made traveling abroad for study more feasible for students. The call for internationalization on campuses involves not only international student enrollment and curriculum changes. It also means providing American students with the resources and opportunity to study abroad. American colleges and universities must accept the call to internationalize their campuses and prepare American students for a more global society (Talbert & Stewart, 1991). The thought of internationalizing higher education is not a new concept. American colleges and universities have historically prepared students to participate in life; and today’s colleges and universities have been identified as an essential factor in producing qualified citizens to aid the U.S. in its efforts to compete globally.

For decades institutions of higher education have hosted international students and faculty; however, there has been a greater movement to encourage more domestic students to study abroad (IIE, 2011b). Domestic students who take advantage of study abroad programming not only increase their level of global understanding, but also provide a more global perspective in their classrooms. Domestic students, across race and ethnicity, must be afforded the opportunity to learn and participate in study abroad in order to support this movement.

Institutions have been called to increase diversity in study abroad sites but most importantly across the race and ethnicity of participants (IIE, 2007). By and large, students of color continue to participate in study abroad at a much lower rate than their White peers (Comp, 2008). Identifying and addressing issues of opportunity regarding study abroad programming among students of color are important to the future of this nation and its citizens. Additionally, it is important when addressing issues surrounding study abroad programs that students of color are not treated as a monolithic group. Black students in particular continue to have the lowest participation rates in study abroad compared to other students of color. Black undergraduates encounter distinctly different challenges when considering studying abroad. Even though study abroad is considered a type of experiential learning, many Black students are faced with a number of personal and institutional factors that may negatively color their perceptions of study abroad and impede their desire to participate in the program.

Study abroad programs have been proven to provide students with a number of personal and academic benefits. The Office of Postsecondary Education (OPE, 2009) stated that there are four widely recognized benefits of study abroad: (1) study abroad programs provide young citizens with cognitive and affective competencies necessary for them to thrive in a global economy, (2) international experience and competency contributes to a comprehensive liberal

arts education, (3) study abroad programs can provide specialized training not available at home institutions, and (4) study abroad experiences promote personal growth, development, and maturity (OPE, 2009). Moreover, experts have found that studying abroad increases maturity, cross-cultural understanding, international competency, and career marketability (Akande & Slawson, 2000; Carlson, Bum, Useem, & Yachimowicz, 1990; Kitsantas, 2004).

The federal government, acknowledging the benefits of study abroad, has joined the efforts to increase participation. Some federal programs have focused on increasing participation among underrepresented groups (Lincoln Commission, 2005; NAFSA, 2010). In 2005, the Commission on the Abraham Lincoln Study Abroad Fellowship program (Lincoln Commission) stated that “promoting and democratizing undergraduate study abroad is the next step in the evolution of American higher education” (p. v). The Commission further added:

Making study abroad the norm and not the exception can position this and future generations of Americans for success in the world much the same way that the establishment of the land-grant system and enactment of the GI Bill helped create the “American century.” (p. v)

Based on the mission of the Lincoln Commission, the Paul Simon Study Abroad Foundation Act (Paul Simon Act of 2009) was passed by Congress in June 2009. The goals of the Paul Simon Act are to work in partnership with institutions of higher education to create American citizenry that are globally informed by “increasing participation in quality study abroad programs, encouraging diversity in student participation in study abroad, diversifying locations of study abroad, particularly in developing countries and by making study abroad a cornerstone of today's higher education” (NAFSA, 2010, para. 4). Study abroad programs serve as an excellent tool in providing undergraduates with an international educational experience.

These programs offer a host of benefits for those fortunate enough to participate. The federal government has also sought the experiences of professionals within organizations to gain information and data concerning international education and study abroad programs.

There are a number of international educational organizations that provide services and resources to students, institutions, and parents. The Institute for the International Education of Students (IES), the National Association of International Educators (NAFSA), and the Council for International Education (CIEE) has provided students, educators, and governmental agencies with useful information on study abroad best practices, trends, reports, and demographics. Each organization has proven vital to the advancement of international education, specifically study abroad programs. Leaders in these organizations have promoted study abroad as a public good by engaging politicians in conversations about global awareness and international education. Recently, the Lincoln Commission (2005) set a goal of sending 1 million American undergraduates abroad by the 2016-2017 academic year. The Lincoln Commission stated that “institutional leadership and commitment to the expansion of study abroad programs, diversity of students and destinations, and financial barriers” (Lincoln Commission, 2005, p. 14) are the three major barriers to their affirmed goal.

Of these barriers, student diversity is the overarching theme for this study. With the continual increase in study abroad participation, more focus has been placed on increasing the participation of students of color. The *Open Doors* report (IIE, 2009b) showed American participation increased 8.5% to 262,416 in the 2007-2008 academic year, “reflecting a strong commitment to the value of an international academic experience” (para. 2). Although the number of American undergraduates participating in study abroad has increased, not all students are profiting from the benefits of studying abroad. The Institute on International Education (IIE)

reported that only 21.3% students of color participated in study abroad programs during the 2009-2010 academic year (IIE, 2011).

Black students, who constitute the largest racial minority population on today's American campuses, have the most disproportionate representation in study abroad programs. The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) reported that Black enrollment was at 14.3% in 2009; while the *Open Doors* (2010) reported only 4.2% of Blacks participated in study abroad during the 2008/2009 academic year. The imbalance between college enrollment and study abroad participation among Blacks is an issue that cannot be ignored. Disparity in study abroad program participation can lead to the widening of academic and economic gaps between Blacks and their White peers (Institute for the Study of Educational Policy, 1978) and presents an inaccurate reflection of American diversity to other countries (Lincoln Commission, 2005). The Lincoln Commission (2005) believed bringing balance to the demographic profile of students studying abroad would result in a greater diversity of Americans studying abroad. Further investigation is needed to identify conditions or barriers hindering Blacks from participating in study abroad. Black undergraduates have distinctive needs and barriers compared to their White peers when considering opportunities abroad. Intentional efforts are needed in order to provide Blacks with the tools and experiences needed to compete in today's global society.

The lack of racial and ethnic minority participation in study abroad has been recognized as an area of concern within higher education. With minority populations increasing each year in the United States, increasing numbers of students of color are arriving on campuses expecting to achieve excellence. According to Akomolafe (2000), "minorities will represent a significant portion of the American labor force in the nearest future" (p. 103). Nonetheless, minorities have "historically represented segments of the population least capable of competing in the national

and international marketplace” (p. 103). As racial minorities, Blacks have been challenged by the lack of awareness and opportunity regarding college programs such as study abroad. A lack of awareness and opportunity to such programs results in inequitable learning experiences and future job opportunities may be compromised. Moreover, if Blacks continue to lag behind their peers in educational experiences such as study abroad, they will not only lack the benefits associated with studying abroad, their ability to compete in a national or international marketplace could be substantially diminished.

There needs to be a push to educate Blacks on the benefits of study abroad and the long term impact it can have on their personal and professional development. Student affairs practitioners, especially those working in international affairs are concerned by Black students’ lack of awareness and participation in education abroad programs (Norton, 2008). Earnest efforts have been made by government officials and college administrators towards mending the gap in study abroad participation among Blacks, with educators calling for more rigorous research on the topic (Wilson-Oyelaran, 2006; Woodruff, Doan, Hoff, Hall Troup, & Hernandez, 2004).

Students pursuing higher education in the U.S. have a wide range of institutions from which to select. American colleges and universities are arranged into a variety of categories such as two-year, HBCU, religious affiliation, and for-profit institutions (Mastrodicasa, 2008). Within each type of institution the number of students who studying abroad also varies. Chow and Villarreal (2011) reported that 36.6% of all U.S. students studying abroad were enrolled in Doctorate institutions, followed by 30.1% in Baccalaureate institutions, 18.3% in Master's institutions, 6.5% with independent program providers, 5.9% in an Associate's institutions, and 2.6% in other (i.e., consortia and non-U.S. institutions). Therefore, study abroad is considerably

impacted by institutional type. HBCUs do not fall into the majority (i.e., doctoral/research extensive and intensive institutions) of institutions that send students abroad. They have traditionally provided “positive social and psychological environments for Black students” to develop intellectually (Allen, 1992, p. 40).

Although historically Black colleges and universities could offer a unique insight to diversifying study abroad programs and increasing participation among Blacks, HBCUs do not always have the resources to support such programming (Akomolafe, 2000). Opportunities for an international education should be made available to all students regardless of institution type because global competencies and awareness are skills critical to the future of this country and its people (Stearns, 2009). Educators and administrators must emphasize study abroad as an essential component of higher education, specifically making intentional steps toward increasing participation among underrepresented groups. Research and greater understanding of this unique population is needed to forward the mission.

Further research is warranted to understand the characteristics and views of racial and ethnic minorities, specifically Blacks, towards study abroad. More specifically, there is a great need to focus on Black undergraduates attending HBCUs. There remain gaps in the literature and few rigorous studies of this phenomenon. This will be discussed further in Chapter Two.

### **Purpose of the Study**

Survey research regarding the benefits, barriers, and other factors influencing study abroad has been conducted primarily on undergraduates attending predominantly White institutions (PWIs). The response rates among Black undergraduates have been generally low and disproportionate to that of White students, making generalizability to the larger population of Black college students problematic. Moreover, little research to date has studied Black study

abroad participation among students at historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs). Although the majority of Black undergraduates do not matriculate to HBCUs, most Black college graduates were educated at HBCUs (Allen, 1992). Since these institutions are successful with graduating Black undergraduates, research on Black students' participation in study abroad at HBCUs is appropriate and warranted. The purpose of this study was threefold. First, I wanted to explore how Black undergraduates attending historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) perceived study abroad programs. Second, I wanted to understand how individual and institutional characteristics related to the desire of Black undergraduates at HBCUs to study abroad. Finally, I wanted to determine to what degree individual and institutional variables predicted Black undergraduates' desire to participate in study abroad. The goal is to expand the knowledge base regarding this phenomenon and encourage administrators to become more aware of the diversity of perceptions among Black undergraduates regarding study abroad, specifically at HBCUs. These data will inform suggestions to improve practice and advance knowledge in the field of higher education and student affairs.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions will guide the study:

1. What are the perceptions of study abroad among Black undergraduates at the selected historically Black colleges and universities?
2. What are the demographic characteristics (i.e., gender, field of study, financial aid status, mother's education level, father's education level, cumulative grade point average, hometown neighborhood demographics, international experience, and class standing) of the respondent sample of Black undergraduates at selected HBCUs?



- a. Are there significant relationships between individual characteristics (i.e., gender, field of study, receive financial aid, mother's education level, father's education level, cumulative grade point average, hometown neighborhood demographics, international experience, and class standing) and respondents' desire to study abroad at their current institution?
  - b. To what extent do individual characteristics (i.e., gender, field of study, receive financial aid, mother's education level, father's education level, cumulative grade point average, hometown neighborhood demographics, international experience, and class standing) predict the desire of respondents to study abroad at their current institution?
3. Is there a significant relationship between institutional factors (i.e., sources of information, advisor and faculty interaction, and international opportunities) and respondents' desire to study abroad at their current institution?
4. To what extent do institutional factors (i.e., sources of information, advisor and faculty interaction, and international opportunities) predict the respondents' desire to study abroad at their current institution?
5. Are there significant relationships between individual characteristics (i.e., gender, field of study, receive financial aid, mother's education level, father's education level, cumulative grade point average, hometown neighborhood demographics, international experience, and class standing) and respondents' perceptions about study abroad?
6. Is there a significant relationship between institutional factors (i.e., sources of information, advisor and faculty interaction, and international opportunities) and respondents' perceptions of study abroad?

7. Is there a relationship between respondents' perceptions of study abroad and their desire to study abroad at their current institution?

### **Significance of the Study**

There are many reasons for studying commonly held perceptions among Black undergraduates on the campuses of HBCUs. First, Blacks continue to disproportionately participate in study abroad. Second, although there have been strides to increase access and enrollment for Blacks in higher education, Blacks persist in not having equal opportunity to participate in educational programs such as study abroad. Third, little empirical research is available which specifically studies the study abroad participation, experiences, and constraints of Blacks attending HBCUs. This study will highlight the unique characteristics of its respondents and then provide empirical evidence of statistically significant relationships between individual characteristics and institutional factors, and respondents' desire to study abroad. Predictive testing will show if there is a likelihood that Black undergraduates at the selected HBCUs desire to study abroad at their current institution based on individual and institutional factors.

### **Overview of Study**

The study will be developed over five chapters. Chapter One introduces the statement of the problem and the significance of the study. Chapter Two reviews literature on the history of study abroad programs, benefits of study abroad, barriers found among Blacks, and brief overview of historically Black colleges and universities. Chapter Three outlines proposed methods to conduct this study. Chapter Four reports the findings of the study. Chapter Five discuss the findings in the context of the current literature and provides implications for future research and practice.

## CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

Study abroad, also known as education abroad, is an experiential learning opportunity that has many personal, intellectual, societal, and institutional benefits. These programs are available at most types of institutions of higher education across the U.S., but not all students have an awareness of or opportunity to study abroad programs. Although the benefits study abroad offers students are numerous, there are barriers, real and perceived, that hinder participation among Black students. This chapter provides an historical overview of study abroad and highlights four areas regarding the importance of study abroad and its significance for Black undergraduates: demographics; benefits; barriers; and historically Black colleges and universities.

### **Historical Overview of Study Abroad**

Study abroad programs have been present in our colleges and universities for many years. The establishment of study abroad programs has been an important part of global learning since World War II. American faculty began touring abroad during the early years of the colonial period. During the nineteenth century, faculty visited Great Britain along with other European countries to gain postgraduate training and obtain other experiences useful to novice representatives of colonial America. “The dominant posture of these early U. S. scholars abroad was often respectful humility toward their elders and betters; they came primarily to watch and to learn” (Goodwin & Nacht, 1991, p. 1).

Over time American scholars shifted their single-mindedness on foreign educational practices and modeling. American leadership became reluctant to create alliances with their European peers and focused on creating a democratic society. As the U.S. developed its own identity during the late nineteenth century, priorities were focused on the advancement of North

America. Also during this time scholars were called to focus on domestic issues and the development of this country. Study and travel abroad was then centered on only the great educational centers of “Germany, France, Austria, and the United Kingdom for advanced training and continued stimulation” (p. 2). These experiences were then used to advance research at schools such as John Hopkins and Cornell (Goodwin & Nacht, 1991).

After the isolationist period between World War I and World War II, the number of faculty traveling abroad began to rise. The increase in scholarship abroad brought to light the lack of global understanding among many Americans. World War II brought about new global opportunities and new responsibilities for Americans. However, the U.S. demonstrated a lack of preparedness in leadership and in the knowledge of other countries (Goodwin & Nacht, 1988, 1991). As World War II continued, so did opportunities for scholars to travel abroad. “Academics were involved not only in military service but also in intelligence, logistical planning, and, after the war, occupation and recovery” (Goodwin & Nacht, 1991, p. 3). These experiences challenged scholars to learn and understand languages and cultures and “to comprehend the nature of past and potential global systems” (p. 3). Faculty returned to their campuses with advanced levels of international competency and enthusiasm for learning abroad. Their experiences coupled with the country’s need to compete globally inspired a reexamination of international travel and study. The U.S. higher education system became not only a focal point for advanced knowledge but also for cultural curiosity and understanding. Faculty and students were advancing their intellectual competence by traveling and studying abroad.

As student interest and participation in study abroad programs increased, scholars defined five types of academic travel abroad that appeared post-World War II: (a) reconstruction and development assistance programs; (b) specialists used to study particular areas of the world; (c)

programs for average citizens to learn about others (e.g., Fulbright Scholar Program, 1946); (d) cultural diplomacy or public diplomacy; and (e) other academic research (Goodwin & Nacht, 1991). With each passing decade academic travel (i.e., study abroad) transformed to meet the needs of faculty as well as of students. As a response to increased student interest and to enhance international competence among Americans, education abroad programs such as Junior Year Abroad and the Fulbright Program were established.

The Junior Year Abroad program was established at the University of Delaware (UD) by a French professor who declared, “We shall always be at a disadvantage in our foreign relations of every kind...until there is a much larger number of Americans who know the language and in some measure the customs and methods of the peoples... with which we associate abroad” (Stearns, 2009, p. 69). Under his charge and the support of the UD administration, over 1200 students studied in France by 1939. Later in the 1940s, the government-supported Fulbright Program was launched to provide financial assistance to students and professionals in order to gain knowledge and experience abroad. Today the Fulbright program is the most highly recognized international exchange program in the world. It has been supported by the Americans through yearly appropriations from the U.S. Congress and by international constituents (U.S. Department of State, 2010).

During the 1970s and 1980s, there was a massive increase in student participation in study abroad programs. Although earlier student participation was among “juniors at elite liberal arts colleges or to language majors aiming to improve their linguistic facility” (Goodwin & Nacht, 1991, p. 14), today, first-year undergraduates through graduate students across various fields of study, participate in study abroad programs. Study abroad programs for students evolved even more in the 1980s as institutions of all types began to send students abroad to gain

new knowledge and experiences (Goodwin & Nacht, 1991). Political leaders and other non-institutional agencies began to endorse study abroad and recognized the program as having a significant impact on national security and personal and career development.

The 1990s and the 21<sup>st</sup> century started an era of student-led study abroad initiatives. More than ever, undergraduates are seeking study abroad opportunities at colleges and universities. Students are considering study abroad as a significant element of their undergraduate experience. During the academic year of 2005-2006 “over 222,000 American collegians studied abroad for credit” (Stearns, 2009, p. 73). This number had doubled since the 1997-1998 academic year. The majority of institutions across the U.S. now provide study abroad programs and other opportunities abroad (i.e., internships, teaching, and volunteering). Stearns (2009) posited that “the explosion of study abroad testified to dramatic gains in student awareness of the relevance of global issues and of foreign study as a means of addressing them, and to . . . the spread of organizational networks” (p. 73). Colleges and universities are now developing an assortment of programs, including student exchanges, professor-led programs, and student-developed studies. In addition to institutional programs, private and commercial programs are also providing study abroad options for students (Stearns, 2009). Programs are no longer solely focused on language acquisition but on business, education, and other fields of study. According to Stearns (2009), there are two current thoughts concerning study abroad. “First, as with higher education itself in the United States, there was a commitment to greater democratization; no longer, at least in principle, should study abroad aim simply at a private school elite.” And secondly, “the language learning emphasis in much of the original thrust was diluted in favor of an awareness of the growing pervasiveness of English...and the broader goal

of global awareness” (p. 72). In spite of this, there has been more progress in language acquisition than in national democratization (Sterns, 2009).

Since 1947, international education organizations have actively pursued efforts to increase and advance international education on and off American campuses. Without the commitment and dedication of educators and professionals in the field of international education, organizational networks such as the Institute on International Education (IIE), the Council for International Educational Exchange (CIEE), the National Association of International Educators (NAFSA), and the Forum on Education Abroad would not exist. Each was established to promote and address issues related to international education. Although their missions are similar, each organization offers unique products, services, and programs including research articles, funding, and the facilitation of international exchanges. These organizations have been strong advocates for professionals and students extending themselves to study, teach, work, or volunteer abroad.

### **Demographics of Study Abroad Participants**

Study abroad has experienced consistent growth as an educational initiative. However, no matter how impressive the data appear, participants in these programs represent only a small proportion of total enrollment in U.S. higher education. “Just over one percent of all U.S. students enrolled in U. S. higher education at any academic level typically study abroad during any single academic year” (IIE, 2011b). Even with such a low percentage of overall participation, study abroad has continued to show progress. Participation among students enrolled in U.S. higher education has tripled over the past 20 years. There has been a “steady rise in study abroad numbers each year since the data have been tracked, with the exception of 2008/09, when world economic conditions had caused a slight dip” (IIE, 2011b).

As participation rates in study abroad have increased, more attention has been focused on the profile of its participants. The profile of U.S. students studying abroad in 2010-2011 were 78.7% White, 7.9% Asian, 6.4% Hispanic or Latino(a), 4.7% Black or African American, 1.9% multiracial, and 0.5% American Indian/Alaska Native. By academic level, juniors led their peers in participation at 35.8%, while seniors followed at 21.8%. Lastly, by gender, female students accounted for 63.5% of study abroad participants, slightly lower from the prior academic year; males comprised 36.5% (IIE, 2011). Caucasians, women, and social science and humanities majors have led in the number of students taking advantage of study abroad programs (Barker, 2000; IIE, 2011).

#### **Race and ethnicity.**

Since the end of World War II, White students have studied abroad more than any other race or ethnicity. It is not clear why Whites have higher rates of participation; however, Landau and Moore (2008) speculated that a historical relationship between White students and their western European hosts could be one factor. This historical relationship may have been attributed to similar cultural backgrounds and economic status. Black students do not share the same racial background as the majority of the host country's citizens among most U.S. study abroad destinations. Also when considering race and ethnicity it is important to note that the numbers of students of color enrolled in higher education declines during the average year for study abroad attendance. It is reasonable to conclude that the lack of participation can be attributed in part that students of color drop-out rates increase during their junior year and beyond (Penn & Tanner, 2008).



**Gender.**

Women have consistently accounted for 65% of all study abroad participants, with only a few fluctuations over the past decade (Stearns, 2009). Women characteristically major in the arts, humanities, and social sciences, which are most likely academic majors to encourage students to study abroad (Stearns, 2009). Other factors have been considered when considering gender disparity in study abroad. Are women more open than men? Do women see more opportunities for fun abroad than they do on their campuses? Are women just simply more engaged on a global level? Each of these questions is significant in understanding why women participate in study abroad more often than men, yet the reasoning remains unclear (Stearns, 2009).

**Class standing.**

The year students decide to study abroad has remained consistent since the early establishment of study abroad programs (IIE, 2009). According to Goodwin and Nacht (1988), the majority of students study abroad during their junior year. It is unclear why students study abroad during their junior year; however, the influence of the Junior Year Abroad program, which was designed to commence during a students' junior year, could be one factor. Among undergraduates participating in study abroad programs, 35.8% did so during their junior year (IIE, 2011). According to the latest Open Doors report (IIE, 2011) seniors represented 21.8% of all U.S. students studying abroad during the 2009/2010 academic year, followed by sophomores (13.2%), bachelor's unspecified (11.0%), master's students (8.1%), and first-year students (3.5%).

### **Field of study.**

Despite the consistent participation trends regarding gender and academic class standing, participation by field of study is changing. Students majoring in the humanities and social sciences once dominated study abroad participation (Szekely & Krane, 1997). Yet, in recent years, participation of students majoring in business and management has increased (IIE, 2009). According to IIE (2011), social science majors accounted for 22% of those studying abroad followed closely by business and management majors (21%) and humanities majors (12%). The remainder of American undergraduates who pursued study abroad in the 2009/2010 academic year majored in fine or applied arts (8%), physical/life sciences (8%), foreign languages (6%), health sciences (5%), education (4%), engineering (4%), math/computer science (2%), and agriculture (1%).

Researchers have shown that field of study has played an important role in whether a student will participate in study abroad. Rigid curriculum and course sequences in science, medicine, or technology usually do not allow enough flexibility for students to take courses abroad (Grynspan, 2007 & Barker, 2000). The majority of students use study abroad programs to earn credits towards their field of study, although others participate for the experience and an opportunity to explore (Szekely & Krane, 1997).

Regardless of why students study abroad, some students feel their academic major precludes study abroad. Norfles (2007) reported feelings that “the study abroad experience [interrupted] their undergraduate studies and [delayed] their time to graduate” (p. 59). Graduation delays can also increase the cost of higher education. Also, Hembroff and Rusz (1993) found that African Americans in particular were “less represented among Arts and Letters majors, which yield a disproportionately large number of study abroad students” (p. 29). This

highlights the need for expanding opportunities for study abroad beyond the traditional liberal arts disciplines.

### **Benefits of Study Abroad**

The benefits of study abroad have had institutions of higher education, non-profit organizations, and the government energized about the long-term impact for students and the nation. Study abroad has been shown to enhance both affective and cognitive skills that assist students' development in college and as global citizens. Relevant to affective outcomes, other findings have indicated that students have demonstrated an increase in cultural empathy, increased tolerance, and intercultural awareness (Akande & Slawson, 2000; Kitsantas, 2004; Sandell, 2007). Cognitive outcomes include increases in students' language acquisition, education and career attainment, and international competencies (Trooboff, Vande Berg, & Rayman, 2007/2008; Younes & Asay, 2003). The majority of information on the benefits of study abroad is anecdotal. There have been only a few empirical studies conducted on the benefits, outcomes, and impact of study abroad and these studies have been widely used throughout the literature. In the following section, empirical studies along with anecdotal evidence regarding the benefits of study abroad will be discussed.

The benefits associated with studying abroad represent intellectual, societal, and institutional categories, which add value to the undergraduate experience. Intellectually, study abroad can benefit students' achievement levels. Picard, Bernardino, and Ehigiator (2009) concluded that "students who study abroad also tend to be more engaged in their studies and perform better academically" (p. 327). Moreover, Martinez, Ranjeet, and Marx (2009) found that "the goals and educational value of study abroad experiences reach beyond the development of international perspectives or increased intercultural communication skills; these experiences

influence students' personal development and elevate their intellectual maturity" (p. 527).

Intellectual enhancement is critical in that it enables students to pursue a wider range of career opportunities and increases their marketability.

According to Sandell (2007), study abroad positively influences students' lives in four areas: "professional role, international perspectives, personal developments, and intellectual development" (p. 13). She also found that international education and study abroad enhanced economic and career benefits, international perspectives, global mindedness, self-confidence, critical thinking skills, intellectual development, and the acquisition of an additional world language.

Kitsantas (2004) examined the impact study abroad on students' cross-cultural skills and global understanding and "the role that students' goals for participating in study abroad programs play on the development of these outcomes" (p. 441). Using a factor analysis of the Study Abroad Goals Scale (SAGS), Kitsantas discovered three factors fostered participation in study abroad. These factors were: "(1) to enhance their cross-cultural skills, (2) to become more proficient in the subject matter, and (3) to socialize" while simultaneously focusing on gaining cross-cultural sensitivity and understanding (p. 441). Results of the study indicated that there were no significant differences in a students' level of cross-cultural skills or global understanding as it related to program type (i.e., England, France, Greece, Italy, or Spain). These results supported her hypothesis that study abroad programs were beneficial to the enhancement of cross-cultural skills and global understanding. She also noted that study abroad students "reported higher levels of emotional resilience, openness and flexibility; perceptual acuity and personal autonomy" (p. 447).

Through the Study Abroad Evaluation Project (SAEP), Carlson, Burn, Useem, and Yachimowicz (1990) examined the outcomes of study abroad among American undergraduates. Comparing students who studied abroad and those who did not study abroad, they found American students who participated in study abroad programs generally did so with the expectation that this experience would cultivate cross-cultural skills and knowledge, enhance personal growth and self-confidence, and allow them to be more competitive in an increasingly diverse and globally oriented job market. Carlson and colleagues (1990) found that participants increased their language skills, developed different views on domestic and foreign policy, and were more interested in foreign policy. The primary goals of study abroad programs were “to improve or increase students’ understanding about themselves, the world, or their particular area of study” (Che, Spearman, & Manizade, 2009, p. 100). A number of colleges and universities are invested in producing graduates who are, “among other things, culturally aware and global-minded” citizens (Che, Spearman, & Manizade, 2009, p. 101).

Study abroad programs are significant to our society because they allow students to better understand the world and shape citizens for international and government careers and global consciousness (Goodwin & Nacht, 1988). Countless colleges and universities are investing time and resources in preparing their students to become global citizens (Osfield, 2008). One societal benefit to studying abroad is that it prepares students to gain the talents necessary to become more internationally competent citizens. According to Picard, Bernardino and Ehigiator (2009), global citizenship refers to students who

variously and in combination, have had exposure to other cultures, possess foreign language skills, have tolerance for those whose cultural backgrounds are different from their own, display a sense of curiosity about the world beyond their immediate

experiences, are adept at navigating in unfamiliar circumstances and show empathy for others. (p. 321)

As members of a global society, it is important that today's college students are prepared to compete and comfortably navigate the world in which they live and work.

As institutions continue to diversify as a result of demographic shifts, faculty and administrators must commit to making strides to increase racial and ethnic minority participation in study abroad in order to decrease the achievement gap that exists between White students and non-White students. Furthermore, when minority students such as Blacks become involved in international learning there is an added value in the classroom and the overall campus.

Institutions experience an "enhanced campus harmony and understanding, richer classroom experiences, the benefits of peer influence for encouraging additional students to study abroad, and the positive impact on minority campus recruitment that could come from publicizing minority student experiences" (Picard et al., 2009, p. 327). Consequently, an increase in Black students' participation in study abroad programs would only increase the knowledge of diversity in and outside the classroom.

Minority students who lack exposure to education abroad run the risk of missing out on the benefits and opportunities attributed to these programs. Benefits "such as enhanced personal development, refined interpersonal skills, employment readiness, preparation for graduate study, developed foreign language capabilities, broadened perspective, and other qualities often derived from studying abroad," (Picard et al., 2009, p. 327) all contribute to decreasing the achievement gap between Blacks and Whites, as well as to increasing students' ability to live a more productive life.

Martinez, Ranjeet, and Marx (2009) argued that although study abroad is a noteworthy educational program, if participation remains imbalanced it could have long term economic and social effects for different groups of people. Martinez et al. (2009) stated that “the need to provide equal access to study abroad opportunities for all students is not only an exercise in social justice; it has also become a necessity for universities” (p. 528). Historically, institutional diversity initiatives have increased access to higher education for most underrepresented students. Now that we have more diverse campuses and classrooms, American universities must ensure these students are exposed to and presented with programs and services that will positively add to their academic experiences (Martinez et al., 2009). University administrators must be cognizant of barriers and individual and institutional factors that hinder underrepresented students, namely Blacks, from taking advantage of programs critical to achieving excellence.

### **Study Abroad Among Black Students**

Craig (2009) insisted that Black students should study abroad for 10 reasons: (1) to expand employment opportunities, (2) to increase understanding of the world and society, (3) to broaden experiences, (4) to meet people from different backgrounds and cultures, (5) to increase income potential, (6) to explore new interests, (7) to learn specific skills that are career related, (8) to gain new insights and outlooks while enjoying new relationships, (9) to take control of their future, and (10) to find out what they want to do in life. There are potentially countless benefits to studying abroad for African Americans. Penn and Tanner (2008) found that African American students have a slightly higher desire to study abroad in Africa. He noted that “the reason is academically based, as they desire to learn more about their own culture and history” (p. 12). African American students do have a desire to study abroad, but research has indicated

that “more education, mentoring, and support are needed for Black students to participate in international education” (p.13). There has been notable evidence that experts and advocates in the field are committed to increasing opportunities for African Americans to study abroad (IES, 2009).

The Academy for Educational Development (AED) colloquium on diversity in education abroad was created to “ensure that all American undergraduate students have an equal opportunity to participate in a quality education abroad program” (Herrin, 2007, p. 3). Panelists and speakers included leaders in the area of international education, namely Dr. Eileen Wilson-Oyelaran, president of Kalamazoo College, and Stephen Moseley, the chairman of the Basic Education Coalition. Special interest groups are essential in bringing about awareness to the benefits study abroad programs offer African Americans. More research is needed to better understand the views of Black undergraduates towards study abroad. Understanding the attitudes and perceptions of African Americans toward study abroad could assist in educating more professionals about the individual and institutional factors that play a role in participation rates among these students.

### **Barriers and Other Factors that Impact Participation of Black Students**

International education and globalization have been the latest buzzwords on American campuses. Ethnic minority participation in study abroad remains stagnant (Brown, 2002; Shih, 2009). A special edition of *Black Issues in Higher Education* reported that from fall 1999 to summer 2000, 143,590 American students studied abroad: 122,131 (85.1%) were Caucasian and 5,070 (3.5%) were African American. Eleven years later, *Open Doors* (2011) reported African American participation increased only 1.2 percent (4.7%), remaining disproportionate to their Caucasian peers (IIE, 2011). Overall study abroad participation has increased each year for the



past decade reflecting a growing recognition by students and educators that an international experience is important to students' future careers (Institute of International Education, 2009).

Barriers remain a concern for educators and students of color alike.

There have been numerous presentations, papers, reports, and articles on the barriers encountered by African American undergraduates when considering study abroad. Despite the positive aspects of studying abroad, students of color often times perceive study abroad as too expensive or outside their cultural norms (Burkart, Hexter, & Thompson, 2001). Moreover, many “who can benefit from study abroad lack the information, resources, and support for study abroad that can motivate participation” (Rhodes & Hong, 2009, p. 1). Barriers such as cost and cultural norms prevent students of color from having an opportunity to “produce profound and lasting changes in students' self-image, their academic and professional goals and their attitudes about their roles in society” (p. 2). Furthermore, Brown (2002) posited that “traditionally, international travel and study have not been part of the culture for most students of color” (p. 28). Overall, there are very few empirical studies available that focus on Black undergraduates and their perceptions of study abroad. Those studies that do focus on Blacks are not situated at historically Black colleges and universities. The majority of literature has focused on ethnic minority populations with a spotlight on African Americans at predominantly White institutions. This next section will provide an overview of evidence on the barriers and factors Black undergraduates face when considering studying abroad.

Hembroff and Rusz (1993) conducted a study at Michigan State University (MSU), which has one of the highest overall participation rates in study abroad, to identify factors that influenced students' decision to participate in study abroad. In this highly recognized study, Hembroff and Rusz (1993) focused on African Americans in particular; Whites and other ethnic

minorities were surveyed as well. Cross-sectional surveys of domestic students at MSU who had and had not studied abroad were distributed. Using a self-administered questionnaire, Hembroff and Rusz (1993) measured attitudinal factors across five scales: (1) interest in international relations, (2) global issues, (3) cultural relativism, (4) international relations, and (5) interest in foreign languages.

Hembroff and Rusz (1993) found that socioeconomic factors played a role in the underrepresentation of African Americans in study abroad programs, along with cross-cultural anxieties, lack of knowledge about study abroad, language blocks, and lack of prior international travel. They did find that African Americans, more than the White respondents, were less ethnocentric and more supportive of international collaboration.

Similar to Hembroff and Rusz (1993), Carroll (1996) sought to explore barriers that affected students' perceptions of study abroad. Specifically, Carroll (1996) surveyed Caucasians and historically underrepresented students at the University of Colorado. The focus of her study was on the interest and perceived barriers students had towards study abroad programs. Carroll (1996) focused on the interests and perceptions of historically underrepresented students, specifically African Americans, Asian Americans, Hispanic Americans, and Native Americans. Carroll (1996) looked at gender, academic major, ethnicity, financial aid, parent's educational levels, and international travel experiences as variables that may influence student interests and perceptions. The study found that funding, concerns about delay in graduation, and a lack of information were all barriers among historically underrepresented students. Among African Americans, in particular, Carroll found that fear was of greater concern than it was among any other underrepresented group.

Washington (1998) studied African American undergraduates' perceptions of and attitudes toward study abroad programs. The purpose of his survey and focus group study was to identify the most significant factors that contributed to the low participation in study abroad among African Americans. Washington surveyed African American undergraduates at a predominantly White institution and one historically Black college. Washington (1998) found finances, family, and awareness of programs and services offered by the university were related to a lack of participation in study abroad. Participants, specifically, at the historically Black college, reported awareness, lack of interest, lack of time, and job responsibilities as the most significant factors for not participating in study abroad programs. Finances and family issues were also factors indicated as reasons for not participating.

Booker (2001) conducted a quantitative study of applicants and interested non-applicants to study abroad programs. Applicants and non-applicants were compared on "personal characteristics, study abroad preferences, and perceptions of institutional support for international education" (p. iii). Additionally Booker (2001) compared the two groups on the "influence of perceived outcomes or consequences of study abroad, perceived social pressures from important referents, and perceived obstacles to study abroad as related to the decision to apply or not apply" (p. iii). The findings showed that the majority of respondents were female, 75.2 % of non-applicants and 68.8% of applicants. Class standing was different between the groups, the majority of non-applicants were seniors (62.9%) followed by juniors at (15.2%), whereas among applicants, 18.2% were seniors and 59.7% were juniors. Non-applicant ethnic groups were 87.6% percent White (non-Hispanic) American, 4.8% Asian American, and 3.8% African American, and the remainders were other groups. Ethnic groups who had applied were 88.3% White (non-Hispanic) American, 6.5% African American, followed by Asian Americans,

Hispanic Americans, and other groups. Booker (2001) found that there was a significant association between each group (applicants and non-applicants) and gender; females were more likely to apply. As for ethnic groups, Booker's findings showed a significant association between application status and ethnicity. White Americans, as a racial group, predominately applied for study abroad. Other findings indicated that non-applicants were more influenced by factors related to academic and financial concerns than applicants. Additionally, each group mutually perceived studying abroad as enhancing their career options.

More recently, Consuelo-Clemens (2002) determined there was a "relationship between selected demographic variables of a diverse student population at Ohio University and attitudes of cross-cultural effectiveness" and defined barriers to study abroad programs (p. 20). In her study, Consuelo-Clemens defined students of color as any person who was African American, Latino/Hispanic of any race, and multiracial. She utilized Kelly and Myers' Cross-Cultural Adaptability Inventory (CCAI) that included variables on emotional resilience, flexibility/openness, perceptual acuity, and personal autonomy. Gender, father's education, mother's education, travel, language, courses, interaction, parent's salary, and the four variables from the CCAI were used to study differences among students of color who had and had not studied abroad. The study found that 35.5% of all respondents identified finances as the largest barrier, language as the second largest (26.2%), and fears followed (23.4%). Fears were related to leaving the U.S., leaving home, expectations of encountering racism, not being able to adapt, not being competent in the language of the country, and being an American abroad (Consuelo-Clemens, 2002, p. 118). Time and scheduling conflicts were also identified as obstacles to studying abroad for students of color at Ohio University. The previous studies highlighted barriers and other factors among students of color who contributed to the perception of study

abroad or influenced their decision to study abroad. The following sections will specifically highlight information and findings surrounding fear of racism abroad and other barriers perceived among Blacks and other students of color.

Fear of racism has been an important factor among Blacks who have considered study abroad (Carroll, 1996; Consuelo-Clemens, 2002); concerns of fear are true as well as perceived. Black students often lack knowledge about the experiences of Blacks who have studied abroad. Black students considering studying abroad often encounter myths and unpersuasive dialogue about *other* countries and being Black while studying abroad (Carroll, 1996; Jackson, 2009; Woodruff, Doan, Hoff, Hall, Troup, & Hernandez, 2004). These messages often come from by their peers, family, and the media. The “number one myth is that the education abroad is not for Black students” (Craig, 2009. p. 1). This belief is closely associated with the historical presence of racism and discrimination in the United States. Racial and ethnic minority students “fear the unknown... and some think it [studying abroad] is for them (White people), not for us” (Brown, 2002, p. 29). Although perceptions of racism abroad can be perceived, there are documented experiences of Black students whom have experienced racism while studying abroad.

Talburt and Stewart’s (1999) ethnographic study was based on the relationship of students’ in- and out-of-class experiences during a 5-week study abroad program in Spain. This study focused only on African American students who participated in the Spain program. Some students reported being referred to as a “little morena, negrita, or chocolate” (p. 68), each term referring to a person of dark complexion. Additionally, females were propositioned as prostitutes. Students came to realize that racism was not isolated to the United States. In a student’s reflection she stated, “I didn’t know it (racism) was going to happen. But it’s not like I don’t know how to handle it because I’ve had to handle it all my life” (p. 68). Although racism

can be detrimental for any student, advocates in the field are not willing to accept this barrier as a factor for why African Americans should not consider studying abroad. Some students have experienced racism abroad, yet some students reported that being an American was a reason for discrimination more than being a student of color abroad (Sanders, 2000). In addition to concerns about racism, issues of funding are one of the most commonly reported factors when considering education abroad.

Financing study abroad is an unavoidable factor among students considering studying abroad. This barrier has been most commonly noted to affect the participation of African American undergraduates (Carroll, 1996; Consuelo-Clemens, 2002; Hembroff & Rusz, 1993) and other students of color. Akomolafe (2000) stated that many students of color come from a socioeconomic background that makes it almost impossible for them to participate in study abroad programs. Even with scholarships, some students still will not be able to arrange the time away from work to attend classes internationally. Further, some of these students are single-parents, working, or supporting their immediate family, and cannot risk losing their jobs or even taking time away from work.

Cultural barriers also must be considered when discussing Black student participation in study abroad. Anecdotally speaking, a sense of fear, isolation, and reservations often prevent participation within the Black community (McLellan, 2007). McLellan (2007) posited that the Black community contributes to the lack of African American participation in study abroad. He stated, "The Black community needs to be more proactive about encouraging young African-Americans to take an interest in international education opportunities, such as study abroad" (p. 31). With that stated, an historical perspective must be taken into consideration when discussing the plight of Blacks accessing higher education. African Americans have had to struggle

financially and educationally to even go to college; therefore, education abroad has not been a priority when considering higher education (Penn & Tanner, 2008).

Institutional size and academic factors are additional barriers which students face when considering study abroad (Hser, 2005; Shih, 2009). Shih (2009) reported that minority students, especially those attending smaller institutions, lack information and motivation. Specifically, Shih (2009) stated that “fewer faculty can also result in smaller numbers of faculty who have had international experiences therefore, they are less likely to encourage students to study abroad” (p. 1). Faculty and students also consider time to graduation as an important academic factor when considering studying abroad. Students fear delay in graduation, which is closely associated with their field of study, curriculum, and faculty awareness of study abroad (Carroll, 1996). Hser (2005) acknowledged that “although many faculty perceived that study abroad programs enrich students’ knowledge of other cultures and countries, some feel that study abroad lowers the academic quality of the students’ education, interferes with their personal lives, and delays their professional development” (p. 40).

Cultural norms have been found to play an important role in the perception of students of color considering studying abroad. Brown (2002) found that “traditionally, international travel and study have not been part of the culture for most students of color” (p. 28). Burkart, Hexter, and Thompson (2001) found that students of color often times perceive study abroad as outside their cultural norms. Culture plays a significant role in what students come to know and understand about the world around them. Many of these students have not been privy to information about study abroad either from their peers, family, or institution. Rhodes and Hong (2009) found that many “who can benefit from study abroad lack the information, resources, and support for study abroad that can motivate participation” (p. 1). Barriers associated with cultural

norms can prevent students of color from having an opportunity to “produce profound and lasting changes in students’ self-image, their academic and professional goals and their attitudes about their roles in society (p. 2).

Other barriers include family concerns and attitudes, fear of discrimination, historical patterns, expectations, attitudes, institutional factors, and lack of relevant study abroad programs (Blumenthal & Gutierrez, 2009; Brux & Fry, 2009; Picard et al., 2009). Overall, Black undergraduates face numerous barriers; however, despite the long list of barriers, the benefits of education abroad could outweigh the challenges. There is a need for more empirical research to eradicate barriers that exist among Blacks. Educators must continue to investigate issues of opportunity to study abroad programs for all students, especially Blacks and other underrepresented students. The more knowledgeable practitioners are about barriers, the better informed they will be to elevate or address these factors that impede on Black undergraduates participating in study abroad. The evidence is clear that there are benefits afforded to Black undergraduates who participate in study abroad; conversely, it is even clearer that barriers have contributed and prevented Black undergraduates from studying abroad.

### **Historically Black Colleges and Universities**

Former U.S. President Clinton, in Proclamation 7376, declared November 13 through November 17, 2000, as International Education Week stating that “today we live in a global community, where all countries must work as partners to promote peace and prosperity and to resolve international problems” (Duffy, Farmer, Ravert, & Huittinen, 2003, p. 399). One of the surest ways to develop and strengthen global partnerships is through study abroad programs. Yet, in spite of increased recognition of global awareness, Black undergraduates continue to show slow progress in participating in study abroad.



Ethnic and racial minority populations are increasing yearly in the U.S., and regardless of one's race or ethnicity all citizens are expected to contribute to our global society. By 2050, it is projected to be 61 million African Americans in the United States; with a 71.3% growth, this demographic change will also be reflected on American college campuses over the next decade (IES, 2009). These demographic changes are not new to American college campuses; they are significant to the charge of diversifying study abroad by race/ethnicity, destination, and institution type. Historically Black colleges and universities have recently begun to focus more attention on study abroad programs (Brown, 2001). According to Brown and Davis (2001), there are over 100 HBCUs, including both private and public institutions, and both 4-year and 2-year colleges. There are also approximately 50 other institutions whose enrollment are majority African American but are not designated as HBCUs. These institutions have historically functioned to “develop, create, and teach advanced knowledge to society” (Brown & Davis, 2001, p. 32).

Prior to the 1960s, “more than 90% of the African American students enrolled in higher education in this country were educated in HBCUs” (Kim & Conrad, 2006, p. 399). Historically Black colleges and universities were established based on regulations of Title III of the Higher Education Act of 1965. Congress identified accredited institutions founded prior to 1964 and whose primary mission was the education of African Americans as historically Black colleges and universities (Li, 2007, p. iv). HBCUs have a long history of providing opportunities and unique services to their students. Regardless of race, gender, socioeconomic status, high school grade-point average, or college entry exam scores, HBCUs have provided an opportunity for students to learn, grow, and give back to the community. Educators at HBCUs have prided themselves on providing access to “students whose potential have been judged by instruments

developed for the majority culture” (Willie, Reddick, & Brown, 2006, p. 33) rather than their potential or eagerness to learn. Harper, Carini, and Brides (2004) concurred that HBCUs “offer better learning environments and support outlets for African American undergraduates” providing more positive outcomes among African American students.

Kim and Conrad (2006) found that HBCUs tended to have a “lower student-faculty ratio, lower enrollment, and somewhat higher student-faculty interaction” (p. 414); all of which are positive indicators of overall student development. These conditions are often times not available at larger, predominantly White institutions. Although HBCUs have provided Blacks with benefits not always found at predominantly White institutions, enrollment began to suffer in the 1960s. Decreases in enrollment were due in part to public and political influences as institutions of higher education were encouraged to desegregate. As a result, HBCUs had a dramatic decline in enrollment resulting in “only 17% of Black students enrolling in the 103 HBCUs” in the United States (p. 399). In spite of the decrease in enrollment in the 1960s, the National Center for Education Statistics: Institute of Education Sciences (IES) reported that there was an increase “between fall 1984 and 2004, total minority enrollment increased from 1.9 to 4.7 million, an increase of 146 percent, compared with an increase of 15 percent for White students” (Li, 2007, p. 73). Specifically, there was an increase of 93 percent for African American undergraduates. Decrease in enrollment at HBCUs has had financial consequences for those institutions; however, the increase of Blacks on predominantly White campuses posed challenges among Black students such as “persistence rates, academic achievement, postgraduate study, and overall psychosocial adjustments” (Allen, 1992, p. 28). The challenge now is to ensure that Blacks have the opportunity to take advantage of all educational programs, such as study abroad, at both HBCUs and predominantly White institutions.

Some HBCUs have started to take action at becoming more involved in the globalization and internationalization of their campuses. Akomolafe (2000) insisted that historically Black colleges and universities make study abroad a priority in their institutions. Despite the willingness of leaders at HBCUs to make study abroad a priority, student perceptions and motivation are important considerations. Although students attending HBCUs have been reluctant to study abroad, Brown (2002) contended that the more programs become appealing and affordable, the more attractive study abroad programs will be among African Americans. The Lincoln Commission's (2005) second recommendation in promoting democratizing study abroad focuses on the totality of diversity in study abroad; students, institutions, and destinations. According to the Lincoln Commission (2005), the successful diversification of study abroad participation will occur when

- (a) the demographics of the U.S. undergraduate students abroad are similar to those of the U.S. undergraduate student population; (b) efforts are made to expand the number of American students studying in nontraditional countries; and (c) the proportion of students abroad who are enrolled in community colleges, minority-serving institutions, and institutions serving large numbers of low-income and first-generation students are similar to their share of the undergraduate population. (p. xi)

One reason the Lincoln Commission (2005) encouraged diversification of study abroad was because they believed that people of other nations should have a more accurate picture of diversity in the United States of America. Lack of diversity among students studying abroad could result in misinformation about the nation and its people, along with conjecture and stereotyping. A study of the perceptions of study abroad among Blacks attending HBCUs can offer greater insight in the movement towards diversifying education abroad and add to the body

of literature. Results of the present study could address the disproportionate rates of participation among Blacks and draw attention to the distinctive demographics at HBCUs.

### **Summary**

Study abroad is a long standing experiential program that continues to evolve and expand by destination, program types, and demographic participation. In the twenty-first century, study abroad is seen as an important part of the postsecondary experience. These programs assist students in becoming global citizens. Black undergraduates, however, have been underrepresented in study abroad programs. Participation in study abroad has its benefits, such as enhanced personal development, refined interpersonal skills, employment readiness, preparation for graduate study, developed foreign language capabilities, and broadened perspectives (Picard et al., 2009). Nevertheless, lack of opportunity and other barriers (Hembroff & Rusz, 1993; Hser, 2005; Shih, 2009) continue to have an adverse influence on the desires of Black students considering studying abroad. Specifically, there are factors and perceptions among Black undergraduates attending HBCUs that have yet to be uncovered. Further research is warranted to expand the body of knowledge with respect to Black undergraduates and their perceptions of study abroad at HBCUs.

The next chapter presents the methodology for exploring the perceptions of study abroad among Black undergraduates at HBCUs. Chapter three specifically outlines the research questions, research design, population and participants, an explanation of the variables, instrumentation, procedures, and data analysis for the current study.

## CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was threefold: (1) to explore how Black undergraduates' attending HBCUs perceived study abroad programs; (2) to understand how individual and institutional characteristics related to the desire to study abroad among Black undergraduates at HBCUs; and (3) to determine to what degree individual and institutional variables predicted Black undergraduates' desire to participate in study abroad. Specifically, this study explored the perceptions of study abroad among Black undergraduates attending Kentucky State University (Kentucky), Norfolk State University (Norfolk), Wilberforce University (Wilberforce), and Xavier University of Louisiana (Xavier). Additionally, demographic characteristics and institutional factors were examined to explore their relationship to students' desires to study abroad. This chapter presents the research questions, research design, population and participants, an explanation of the variables, instrumentation, procedures, and data analysis.

### **Research Questions**

Based on the research reviewed in chapter two and the identified gaps in the literature, the following research questions guided this study:

1. What are the perceptions of study abroad among Black undergraduates at the selected historically Black colleges and universities?
2. What are the demographic characteristics (i.e., gender, field of study, financial aid status, mother's education level, father's education level, cumulative grade point average, hometown neighborhood demographics, international experience, and class standing) of the respondent sample of Black undergraduates at selected HBCUs?
  - a. Are there significant relationships between individual characteristics (i.e., gender, field of study, receipt of financial aid, mother's education level, father's education

- level, cumulative grade point average, hometown neighborhood demographics, international experience, and class standing) and respondents' desire to study abroad at their current institution?
- b. To what extent do individual characteristics (i.e., gender, field of study, receipt of financial aid, mother's education level, father's education level, cumulative grade point average, hometown neighborhood demographics, international experience, and class standing) predict the desire of respondents to study abroad at their current institution?
3. Is there a significant relationship between institutional factors (i.e., sources of information, advisor and faculty interaction, and international opportunities) and respondents' desire to study abroad at their current institution?
  4. To what extent do institutional factors (i.e., sources of information, advisor and faculty interaction, and international opportunities) predict the respondents' desire to study abroad at their current institution?
  5. Are there significant relationships between individual characteristics (i.e., gender, field of study, receive financial aid, mother's education level, father's education level, cumulative grade point average, hometown neighborhood demographics, international experience, and class standing) and respondents' perceptions about study abroad?
  6. Is there a significant relationship between institutional factors (i.e., sources of information, advisor and faculty interaction, and international opportunities) and respondents' perceptions of study abroad?
  7. Is there a relationship between respondents' perceptions of study abroad and their desire to study abroad at their current institution?

## **Research Design**

This study used a survey research design administered online to students from four historically Black colleges and universities to explore the perceptions of and desire to study abroad among. This design was chosen because, according to Creswell (2005), survey research designs can be used to sample an entire population of people in order to describe the attitudes or characteristics of a particular population. Since a survey was conducted for the entire population of Black students at each HBCU, the survey took a census of the population (Mertler & Charles, 2008).

## **Populations and Participants**

Purposive sampling was used in the selection of institutions to participate in the study. Purposive sampling allows researchers to select respondents because they possess certain traits or characteristics relevant for a study (Nardi, 2006). Each institution was selected for their specific classification as a historically Black college or university. Additionally, it was important that there was diversity among the selected institutions: each HBCU varied in size, institutional control (public or private), racial and ethnic diversity of students, and religious or secular affiliation. Although the study attempted to look at a broad population, purposive sampling is a type of nonprobability sampling method which means that findings cannot be generalized to the entire population (Nardi, 2006). Therefore, conclusions will be limited to the participating institutions. Implications will be made for other HBCUs similar to the four selected for this study, since I purposefully recruited institutions that reflect the typical characteristics of the majority of HBCUs.

My target population included 2,932 Black undergraduates who attended Kentucky, Norfolk, Wilberforce, or Xavier during the spring and summer semesters of 2011. For the

purposes of this study, Black refers to people of African descent. This also includes people who reported themselves as African American. There were a total of 342 responses to the online survey. After data cleaning, there were 298 useable responses. This represented a 12% total response rate, with the most responses coming from Norfolk: Kentucky (n=9), Norfolk (n=241), Wilberforce (n=36), and Xavier (n=56).

A diversity of historically Black colleges and universities were used to capture the variety of characteristics that HBCUs exhibit (i.e., distinctive history, size, and type). Various faculty and administrators were contacted to get more institutions to participate in the study; however, for various reasons, six out of ten contacts declined to participate or failed to respond to the letter of invitation for the study (see Appendix A). Three of the four participating institutions (i. e., Kentucky, Norfolk, and Xavier) had an office or center for study abroad programs; Wilberforce had a coordinator who organized or assisted students with study abroad options. The following are noteworthy characteristics of each participating institution.

Kentucky State University is located in Frankfort, the capital of Kentucky. Chartered in 1886, Kentucky State University is a historically Black, liberal arts, land-grant university. Kentucky State University is also Kentucky's smallest public university. In fall 2010, Kentucky State University had a total enrollment of 2,851, including 2,606 undergraduates (NCES, 2011). According to the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) in the fall 2010, the Kentucky State University student population was 58.8% Black or African American, 21.1% White, 15.5% race/ethnicity was unknown, 1.8% were non-resident aliens, 1.4% identified with two or more races, and 1.4% were American Indian or Alaskan Native, Asian, and Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander (NCES, 2011). Kentucky has 155 instructional faculty



members and an estimated 17 to 1 student-to-faculty ratio. Lastly, Kentucky prides itself on having a multicultural and racially balanced student body.

Norfolk State University is located in Norfolk, Virginia and was founded in 1935. It is a public, urban, comprehensive institution offering graduate and undergraduate programs. Norfolk State University obtained its university status in 1969 after separating from the Virginia State College. With almost 7,000 enrolled students, Norfolk has an estimated 16 to 1 student-to-faculty ratio. Norfolk's student population is 88% Black or African American, 4.7% White, 2.4% identified with two or more races, 1.8% Hispanic/Latino, 1.2% Asian, 1.1% race/ethnicity was unknown, 0.5% were non-resident alien, and 0.3% were American Indian or Alaskan Native, and Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander (NCES, 2011). Norfolk State also prides itself as currently being one of the largest HBCUs in the nation (Norfolk State University, 2011).

Wilberforce University is located in Wilberforce, Ohio and was established in 1856. Wilberforce is distinct from other HBCUs for two reasons: it is the oldest private HBCU in this nation founded by African Americans and it is committed to experiential learning. Wilberforce University is one of only a few universities in this country that has demonstrated a commitment to experiential learning. Since 1964, all students are required to complete two comprehensive cooperative educational programs. Wilberforce has an enrollment of 680 undergraduates, 55 full-time faculty members, 20 part-time faculty members, and a student-to-faculty ratio of 14 to 1. Wilberforce's student body demographics in fall 2010 were 93.1% Black or African American, 4.0% race/ethnicity was unknown, 1.0% non-resident aliens, 0.7% White, 0.4% Hispanic/Latino, 0.4% American Indian or Alaskan Native, and 0.3% Asian (NCES, 2011).

Xavier University of Louisiana was established as a high school in 1915 by St. Katharine Drexel of Philadelphia and her Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament. Ten years later a four-year

college was added, making Xavier the only Catholic HBCU in the United States. Xavier's student body in fall 2010 was 79.4% Black or African American, 9.0% Asian, 3.3% White, 2.4% identified with two or more races, 2.4% Hispanic/Latino, 2.3% non-resident aliens, 1.0% race/ethnicity was unknown, and 0.1% were American Indian or Alaskan Native (NCES, 2011). Xavier is home to undergraduates, graduate students, and professional degree seekers. Xavier's total enrollment in fall 2010 was 3,391, including an undergraduate enrollment of 2,708. It is important to note that the university's enrollment before Hurricane Katrina in 2005 was 4,100. Xavier of Louisiana has two hallmarks of distinction. One, it continues to rank first nationally in the number of African American students earning undergraduate degrees in both the biological/life sciences and the physical sciences. Two, Xavier ranks first in the nation in placing African American students into medical schools, where it has been ranked since 1993, (Xavier University of Louisiana, 2011).

### **Explanation of Variables**

The major independent variables used in this study to predict the outcome variables (Nardi, 2006) were demographic characteristics: gender, field of study, financial aid status, mother's education level, father's education level, cumulative grade point average, hometown neighborhood demographics, international experience, and class standing. Other independent variables represented institutional characteristics: sources of information, advisor and faculty interaction, and international opportunities. The outcome variables or dependent variables in the study were the respondents' perceptions of study abroad and desire to participate in study abroad at their current institution.

## **Instrumentation**

Participants completed the Study Abroad survey (see Appendix C), an adaptation of the University of Minnesota's Student Survey of Study Abroad (Office of International Programs, 2007). Gayle Woodruff, the Curriculum Integration Program Director in the Learning Abroad Center at the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities and nationally recognized for her efforts in international education, granted me permission to adapt and use the University of Minnesota's Student Survey of Study Abroad as an instrument in this study. The University of Minnesota's Student Survey of Study Abroad instrument was originally used to survey sophomores from the Crookston, Duluth, Morris, and Twin Cities campuses of the University of Minnesota. This survey was developed as part of the University of Minnesota's study abroad curriculum integration initiative to increase participation in study abroad. The instrument was used five times over a three-year span. The University of Minnesota's Student Survey of Study Abroad was divided into four categories: (1) plans of students with regard to study abroad activities, (2) attitudes and views of students toward study abroad, (3) barriers that prevent students from studying abroad, and (4) to what extent faculty and advisers encouraged students to study abroad (Woodruff, Williams, Vande Berg, & Dohm, 2004, p. 77). Validity and reliability statistics were not available.

The instrument for this survey was pilot tested at a four-year, predominantly White, public state institution. The pilot test was completed with a convenience sample of 31 undergraduates who identified as African American or Black. Minor changes were made to the instrument after review by the researcher and other professionals in the field. These changes resulted in a study abroad survey which consisted of 30 questions across 5 sections. The first section of the survey obtained information on the participants' study abroad status (i.e., has or

has not studied abroad). The second section of the survey included questions three through eight and questions 15 and 16 and explored the participants' perceptions of study abroad programs while attending their current institution. Section three of the survey asked about institutional factors (i.e., sources of information, advisor and faculty interaction, and international opportunities). Survey questions in this section included numbers nine through 14 and number 17. In section four of the online survey, survey questions 18, 19, and 20, sought information on international experiences of the participants. The last and fifth section of the survey elicited demographic information for each student: current institution, race or ethnic background, gender, current year in college, primary area of study or major, cumulative grade point average, mother's level of education, father's level of education, hometown neighborhood, and form of financial aid.

### **Procedures**

The first step in the study process was identifying contacts at a sample of HBCUs that were willing to support the study at their specific institution. Appropriate institutions were selected based on their description as a HBCU and whether they provided study abroad opportunities. I identified 10 different administrators and faculty members at various HBCUs by way of university websites and school directories. I emailed each person a copy of the invitation to the study letter (see Appendix A). The invitation included the purpose of the study, a tentative timeline, and my contact information. Ultimately, representatives at Kentucky, Norfolk, Wilberforce, and Xavier agreed to allow me to recruit students from their institutions for participation in this study.

After establishing a contact at each institution, I requested a statement of commitment. The statement of commitment served two purposes: (1) to document each contact's willingness

to participate in the study and (2) to gather information regarding their institutional review board process. After receiving a commitment statement from each contact, I sent a copy of the online survey and the participant invitation letter. Each institution, except Wilberforce, required that the study be approved by their institutional review board (IRB) in addition to approval from Bowling Green State University's Human Subjects Review Board (HSRB). Wilberforce did not have an institutional review board; however, their participation in the study was approved by their dean of students.

After final approval was received for the online survey by the IRBs of Kentucky, Norfolk, and Xavier, I emailed a copy of the approval application to each contact and requested the email addresses for all current African American undergraduates. Kentucky and Xavier provided me the email addresses of all their Black undergraduates, Norfolk posted a link to the online survey via their Daily E-News, and Wilberforce's contact e-mailed a link to the on-line survey to all their Black undergraduates.

Black undergraduates received an e-mail from me, the contact person, or were provided access to the survey via the institution's electronic campus news publication. Regardless of the delivery method, each student had to click on the survey link to access the survey's cover letter (see Appendix D) and the link to the online survey created using SNAP software. The cover letter included important information on educational research such as the purpose and importance of the survey, accurate disclosure, anonymity and confidentiality, and protection. A secondary survey was provided for respondents to enter into a debit card drawing for participating in the study abroad survey. The survey and prize drawing survey were separated to ensure anonymity of survey responses.

The survey was available for two weeks. Creswell (2005) recommended that after the pre-notification of a questionnaire a researcher should make the survey available and follow-up with two reminder notices sent to non-respondents. However, due to varying survey distribution techniques among the participating institutions only Kentucky and Xavier students received the two survey reminder emails (see Appendix E), and Norfolk made the on-line survey available for two weeks through their daily electronic newspaper. Further, technical difficulties resulted in both respondents and non-respondents at Kentucky and Xavier receiving reminder emails.

### **Data Analysis**

At the close of survey collection, I reviewed and entered all survey responses into Statistical Package for the Social Sciences 18.0 (SPSS) for data analysis. After the survey responses were entered into SPSS, I reviewed and cleaned the data. Frequencies were run to better understand the descriptive statistics of the sample. Additional statistical tests were run to answer the research questions posed for this study. The results of these tests are detailed in chapter four.

Research questions 1 and 2 were answered with descriptive statistics to summarize overall trends or tendencies in the data. Descriptive statistics are displayed later in chapter four. The second part of research question 2, along with research questions 3, 5, 6, and 7, included categorical variables and were analyzed using chi-square tests of independence. Non-parametric techniques were used because the data are measured on nominal (categorical) scales from a small population and such data do not meet the stringent assumptions of parametric techniques (Pallant, 2010). Chi-square tests of independence were run to analyze if there was a significant relationship between the independent and dependent variables (Nardi, 2006). The chi-square test of independence specifically measures how independent the two variables are and “asks whether

what you found (observed) is significantly different from what you would have expected to get by chance alone” (Nardi, 2006, p. 157). “Since the [chi-square] value is computed over all categories, a significant [chi-square] does not indicate which categories have been major contributors to the statistical significance” (Hinkle, Wiersma, & Jurs, 1998, p. 581). When a standardized residual for a category is greater than plus or minus 2.00, it can be concluded to be the significant [chi-square] contributor (Hinkle et al., 1998). Additionally, Spearman Rank Order Correlation ( $\rho$ ), a non-parametric alternative was used to analyze research question seven. Correlation analysis such as Spearman  $\rho$  is “used to describe the strength and direction of the linear relationship between two variables” (Pallant, 2010, p. 128).

The third part, research questions 2 and 4, were analyzed with a logistic regression. Logistic regression identifies “a set of independent variables that best predict group membership” (Mertler & Vannatta, 2002, p. 17). A logistic regression can be used when there are two or more categorical independent variables and one dependent variable with two categories in a research question.

The postpositivist research paradigm reflected in this study’s design, described above, is appropriate for answering the research questions I have identified. Consistent with Creswell’s (2009) discussion of postpositivist’s key assumptions, this study “seeks to develop relevant, true statements...that can serve to explain the situation of concern” (p. 7). Knowledge about how Black students at HBCUs perceive study abroad and the relationship of those perceptions to their desire to study abroad will be shaped through the “data, evidence, and rational considerations” (Creswell, 2009, p. 7) provided through the analysis of the survey data. In the next chapter, I report the demographic characteristics of the respondent sample and the findings from the data analysis I performed.

## CHAPTER IV: FINDINGS

There were a total of 2,932 students recruited during the spring and summer semesters of 2011. I had 1,525 usable email addresses from Kentucky, Wilberforce, and Xavier combined. There were an additional 1,407 African American undergraduates attending Norfolk who had access to Norfolk's E-Daily News which included a link to the survey. I received a total of 342 responses from all four institutions for an overall response rate of 12%. After cleaning the data there were 298 usable responses. Any respondent who reported their race or ethnicity as Asian/Pacific Islander, Caucasian/White, Latino/a, Multiracial/Multiracial, Native American, International Student, or other were not considered for this study. There were a total of 44 non-Black respondents whose responses were deleted from the data. I used a survey research design to capture the perceptions of my target population towards study abroad programming at their current institution. My focus was on the perceptions of my respondents; however, I did run analyses to determine relationships among variables and to predict the likelihood that respondents would desire to study abroad based on their demographic characteristics and institutional factors. This chapter will discuss how I cleaned the data; provide a report of frequencies and percentages for each variable, and a presentation of association and predictive results.

### **Data Cleaning and Transformation**

Data cleaning is an important process of this analysis and reporting results; therefore, during this process, I checked for errors, missing cases, and violation of assumptions for the appropriate analytical tests. I checked for errors by looking at the minimum and maximum values, and I did not find any variables outside the intended range. There were a number of missing cases; however, the majority of missing cases were due to the respondent's failure to



answer particular survey questions. I did not detect any systematic patterns that could contribute to missing data.

The minimum expected cell count for chi-square tests of independence is five, anything lower than five violates the assumptions of the test. Some variables were collapsed or dropped during the analysis phase due to low cell sizes. Additional information regarding variables that were collapsed or dropped will be discussed later in this chapter. Data transformations were performed for the variables discussed below.

I requested that respondents self-report their cumulative grade point average (GPA). Only four respondents indicated that their cumulative grade point average was a C- or less (below 1.75) and four respondents did not indicate their cumulative grade point average; therefore, when data analysis was conducted using grade point average these cases were not considered. The above GPA variables were removed prior to analysis testing because I wanted to provide the greatest level of detail in the results section. According to Pallant (2010), since some variables cannot appropriately be used in some statistical analysis, it is appropriate to remove them from the sample. Additionally, when “only a few people in your sample fall into a particular category” (p. 90) it is also acceptable for the researcher to remove these people from the sample (Pallant, 2010).

I had to recode the variable for primary area of study or major from the 12 options provided in the survey into six categories: arts and science, business administration and management, fine and applied arts, health science, education, and engineering. This was done to accommodate for low cell counts in humanities, physical and life sciences, foreign languages, math or computer science, and agriculture. The arts and sciences category then included social science, humanities, physical and life sciences, foreign languages, math and computer science

and agriculture. Further, there were 10 missing cases. These cases were deleted pairwise in analyses that dealt with primary area of study or major.

Lastly, there were additional survey responses that had low response counts or missing cases that were important variables in data analysis. The gender demographics included one transgender/gender non-conforming respondent and two missing responses for gender. Also, there were 16 cases missing for current year in college, five missing cases in hometown neighborhood, and 13 missing cases in financial aid status. When asked whether they had studied abroad while attending their current institution, there were five missing cases. I also asked respondents who had not studied abroad whether they desired to study abroad; 17 out of 264 participants did not answer this question. The dependent variable (do desire to study abroad or do not desire to study abroad) was important in the data analysis; therefore, the missing cases were deleted pairwise in data analysis involving that variable.

### **Demographics and Characteristics of Respondents**

Below are the demographics and characteristics of the respondent population. The respondent population included 298 Black undergraduates from the four participating HBCUs. Responses are available in text and in table. Due to missing values, results for some variables do not all add up to the total population of 298.

**Gender.** The majority of respondents, 76.2 %, identified as women; while 22.8% identified as men and 0.3% identified as transgender/gender non-conforming. Counts and percentages are provided in Table 1.

Table 1

*Gender Demographics of Participants<sup>a</sup>*

Demographics	N	%
Men	68	22.8
Women	227	76.2
Transgender/Gender Non-Conforming	1	0.3

*Note.* <sup>a</sup>Missing values result in some variables not all adding up to the total population of 298.

**Current year.**

The greatest plurality among respondents were juniors, comprising 32.9% of the sample. The second largest group was seniors, 31.9%. There were 23.2% sophomores and 6.7% first-years who responded to the online survey.

Table 2

*Current Year Demographics of Participants<sup>a</sup>*

Demographics	N	%
First-Year	20	6.7
Sophomore	69	23.2
Junior	98	32.9
Senior	95	31.9
Non-degree seeking	6	2.0

*Note.* <sup>a</sup>Missing values result in some variables not all adding up to the total population of 298.

**Cumulative GPA.**

Respondents were asked to self-report their GPA on a four-point scale across six categories: A (3.75-4.0), A-/B+ (3.25-3.74), B (2.75-3.24), B-/C+ (2.25-2.74), C (1.75-2.24), and C- or less (below 1.75). Generally, respondents reported above average grades (i.e., a C or higher): 34.6% of respondents reported their cumulative GPA to be a B, 28.9% reported an A-/B+ cumulative GPA. Lower grades were reported by only 35.2% of respondents combined (see Table 3 for complete breakdown).

Table 3

*Cumulative Grade Point Average Characteristics of Participants<sup>a</sup>*

Characteristics	N	%
A (3.75-4.0)	29	9.7
A-, B+ (3.25-3.74)	86	28.9
B (2.75-3.24)	103	34.6
B-, C+ (2.25-2.74)	56	18.8
C (1.75-2.24)	16	5.4
C- or less (below 1.75)	4	1.3

Note. <sup>a</sup> Missing values result in some variables not all adding up to the total population of 298.

**Field of study.**

Respondents were asked to report their current field of study or major. Of the respondents, 43.1% reported that their field of study or major was in the arts and sciences. Additionally, 18.4% reported they were in the health sciences, 12.5% in business, 12.2% in fine or applied arts, 8.7% in education, and 5.2% in engineering.

Table 4

*Field of Study Characteristics of Participants<sup>a</sup>*

Characteristics	N	%
Arts and Sciences	124	43.1
Business	36	12.5
Fine or Applied Arts	35	12.2
Health Sciences	53	18.4
Education	25	8.7
Engineering	15	5.2

Note. <sup>a</sup> Missing values result in some variables not all adding up to the total population of 298.

**Financial aid.**

The majority of respondents (89.6%) in this study reported receiving some form of financial aid; while only 6.0% of all respondents reported they did not receive any form of financial aid.

Table 5

*Financial Aid Characteristics of Participants<sup>a</sup>*

Characteristics	N	%
Yes	267	89.6
No	18	6.0
Decline to Answer	9	3.0

*Note.* <sup>a</sup>Missing values result in some variables not all adding up to the total population of 298.

**Parents level of education.**

Each respondent had an opportunity to report his or her parents' level of education. The majority of respondents indicated that their mother's (26.8%) and/or father's (31.4%) highest level of education was a high school diploma or GED. Next highest level of education obtained was some college, mother's (22.3%) and father's (23.7%); followed by bachelor's degree, with 18.2% of mothers and 12.9% of fathers holding this degree. Slightly more mothers had a master's, doctorate, or professional degree (11.3%) and two-year degrees (13.7%) than fathers (9.4% and 4.9%, respectively). Overall, 6.2% of mothers and 9.4% of fathers did not complete high school and 1.4% of the respondents' mothers' and 8.4% of the respondents' fathers' education was unknown.

Table 6

*Parental Education Characteristics of Participants<sup>a</sup>*

Parental Education	N	%
<b>Mother's Education</b>		
Did Not Complete High School	18	6.2
High School Diploma or GED	78	26.8
Some College	65	22.3
2-year Degree	40	13.7
Bachelor's Degree	53	18.2
Master's/Doctorate/Professional Degree	33	11.3
Unknown	4	1.4
<b>Father's Education</b>		
Did Not Complete High School	27	9.4
High School Diploma or GED	90	31.4
Some College	68	23.7
2-year Degree	14	4.9
Bachelor's Degree	37	12.9
Master's/Doctorate/Professional Degree	27	9.4
Unknown	24	8.4

*Note.* <sup>a</sup>Missing values result in some variables not all adding up to the total population of 298.

**Hometown neighborhood.**

Respondents were asked to characterize the hometown neighborhood they came from. Of those who responded, 46.1% reported that their hometown neighborhood was in an urban setting, 43.0 % selected suburban, and 10.9% resided in a rural setting.

Table 7

*Hometown Neighborhood Characteristics of Participants<sup>a</sup>*

Characteristics	N	%
Urban	135	46.1
Suburban	126	43.0
Rural	32	10.9

*Note.* <sup>a</sup>Missing values result in some variables not all adding up to the total population of 298.

### International experiences.

Respondents of this study were asked to respond to questions regarding their international experiences prior to attending their current institutions and while attending their current institution. Prior to attending their current institution, only 6.1% of the respondents studied abroad, whereas the majority (93.9%) did not. Furthermore, the majority of respondents (89.2%) had never lived abroad, and 93.2% of them reported that they were not born or raised abroad. Additionally, of the respondents, only 6.8% ever hosted or tutored an international student, and the majority of respondents (69.6%) never traveled abroad.

Table 8

#### *Characteristics of International Experiences of Participants Prior to Current Institution<sup>a</sup>*

Characteristics	N	%
Studied Abroad		
Yes	18	6.1
No	276	93.9
Lived Abroad		
Yes	32	10.8
No	264	89.2
Born/Raised Abroad		
Yes	20	6.8
No	275	93.2
Hosted/Tutored an International		
Yes	20	6.8
No	275	93.2
Traveled Abroad		
Yes	90	30.4
No	206	69.6

*Note.* <sup>a</sup> Missing values result in some variables not all adding up to the total population of 298.

While attending their current institution, 8.2% of the respondents reported they had studied abroad; whereas, a large majority (91.8%) had not. Despite the fact that the majority of respondents had not studied abroad, 82.9% did desire to study abroad. Furthermore, when asked if they interacted with international students while attending their current institution, 40.9% of the respondent population selected “yes” while the majority (59.1%) selected “no”. Neither had

the majority of respondents taken a course with international content (66.7%), attended international or intercultural activities on-campus (60.9%), traveled or visited another country (76.1%), participated in an international internship or volunteer experience (91.6%), or had worked abroad (91.1%). Of all the international experiences reported by the respondents, the majority of respondents (54.1%) reported that they had studied another language at their current institution.

Table 9

*Characteristics of International Experiences of Participants at Current Institution<sup>a</sup>*

Characteristics	N	%
Studied Abroad		
Yes	24	8.2
No	269	91.8
Desire to Study Abroad		
Desire	233	82.9
Do Not Desire	48	17.1
Interaction with International Students		
Yes	121	40.9
No	175	59.1
Course with International Content		
Yes	99	33.3
No	198	66.7
Studied another Language		
Yes	160	54.1
No	136	45.9
International or Intercultural Activities		
Yes	116	39.1
No	181	60.9
Traveled or Visited another Country		
Yes	71	23.9
No	226	76.1
International Internship or Volunteer Experience		
Yes	25	8.4
No	271	91.6
Worked Abroad		
Yes	11	3.9
No	272	91.1

Note. <sup>a</sup> Missing values result in some variables not all adding up to the total population of 298.



## **Respondents' Perceptions of Study Abroad**

In order to answer research question one, I asked respondents to answer questions regarding their perceptions of study abroad at their current institution. There were eight survey items that provided 32 options for respondents to report their perceptions, views, and factors of study abroad at their current institution. Five of the survey items were Likert scales measuring importance, agreement, and awareness, and the other three items requested the respondent select the best description of study abroad at their institution.

### **Feasibility and views of study abroad.**

Respondents were asked to select one statement which best described their view (i.e., perception) of study abroad. The majority of respondents (63.4%) reported that study abroad was a desirable and realistic part of their educational experience. Another 19.9% of the respondents reported that study abroad was a desirable part of the educational experience, but unrealistic in their major. Additionally, 9.8% of the respondents reported study abroad was not essential, and 7% reported that they did not perceive study abroad to be an option. Participants were also asked to rate their understanding of the availability of study abroad as an opportunity at their current institution on a Likert scale of four responses: excellent, very good, average, minimal understanding. 19.6% of the respondents reported it was excellent, 29.6% selected that it was very good, 34.6% agreed that it was average, and 16.1% had minimal understanding.

Table 10

*Perceptions of Study Abroad Among Participants<sup>a</sup>*

Perceptions	N	%
Study Abroad		
Not an option for me	20	7.0
Not essential for me	28	9.8
Desirable but unrealistic in my major	57	19.9
Desirable and realistic	182	63.4
Understanding of Study Abroad Opportunities		
Excellent	55	19.6
Very Good	83	29.6
Average	97	34.6
Minimal	45	16.1

Note. <sup>a</sup>Missing values result in some variables not all adding up to the total population of 298.

### **Importance to field of study.**

Respondents were asked to respond to six statements regarding the importance of study abroad to their field of study and to share their view when considering credit toward degree requirements when considering study abroad. The bulk of the respondents selected important or very important when it came to learning a second language (78.0%), understanding cultural differences (93.5%), knowledge of international issues and of technical and professional practices in other countries (84.1%), ability to tolerate uncertainty (88.0%), and ability to work with people whose beliefs, values, and world views differ from one's own (95.0%). Lastly, the majority of respondents (62.5%) indicated that they did not know if they were allowed to use study abroad credit to fulfill requirements in their major.

Table 11

*Importance of Study Abroad to the Field of Study by Perceptions of Participants<sup>a</sup>*

Perceptions	N	%
Second Language		
Not Important	9	3.0
Somewhat Important	56	18.9
Important	111	37.5
Very Important	120	40.5
Cultural Differences		
Not Important	4	1.4
Somewhat Important	15	5.1
Important	67	22.7
Very Important	209	70.8
International Issues		
Not Important	5	1.7
Somewhat Important	34	13.2
Important	102	47.8
Very Important	154	52.2
Technical and Professional Practices		
Not Important	5	1.7
Somewhat Important	42	14.2
Important	109	36.8
Very Important	140	47.3
Tolerate Uncertainty		
Not Important	7	2.4
Somewhat Important	28	9.6
Important	103	35.3
Very Important	154	52.7
Work with People		
Not Important	6	2.0
Somewhat Important	6	2.0
Important	61	20.7
Very Important	295	75.3
Study Abroad as Credit		
Yes	87	31.6
No	16	5.8
Do not know	172	62.5

Note. <sup>a</sup> Missing values result in some variables not all adding up to the total population of 298.

### **Personal and professional development.**

There were four statements that respondents were asked to rate (i.e., strongly disagree, disagree, agree, and strongly agree) regarding their perceptions of study abroad. The majority of

respondents (51%) reported that they agreed that study abroad was important for personal development. There were 38.6% who strongly agreed, 8.1% who disagreed, and 2% who strongly disagreed. Next, a majority of respondents (53.1%) strongly agreed that study abroad enhanced the ability to think critically and solve problems--35% of the respondents reporting that they agreed with this statement and 10.2% disagreed and 1.7% strongly disagreed. The third statement asked them to rate their perception of whether studying abroad helped graduates find better jobs. Among the respondents, 48.3% reported that they agreed with the statement, 35.7% strongly agreed, 14.3% disagreed, and 1.7% strongly disagreed. Lastly, 48.8% and 43.6% of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed, respectively, that study abroad enhances lifelong career opportunities; whereas, 14.3% disagreed and 2.1% strongly agreed with this statement.

Combined, the majority of respondents reported either that they were strongly unaware or unaware of the following: awareness of study abroad as an option in their major (64.3%), the availability of financial aid for study abroad (54.5%), and scholarships for study abroad (59.1%).

Table 12

*Personal and Professional Developmental Views of Study Abroad Among Participants<sup>a</sup>*

Views	N	%
<b>Personal Development</b>		
Strongly Disagree	6	2.0
Disagree	24	8.1
Agree	151	51.2
Strongly Agree	114	38.6
<b>Critical Thinking and Problem Solving</b>		
Strongly Disagree	5	1.7
Disagree	30	10.2
Agree	156	53.1
Strongly Agree	103	35.0
<b>Graduates Find Better Jobs</b>		
Strongly Disagree	5	1.7
Disagree	42	14.3
Agree	142	48.3
Strongly Agree	105	35.7
<b>Lifelong Career Opportunities</b>		
Strongly Disagree	6	2.1
Disagree	16	5.5
Agree	126	43.6
Strongly Agree	141	48.8
<b>Options in Major</b>		
Strongly Unaware	44	15.0
Unaware	145	49.3
Aware	70	23.8
Strongly Aware	35	11.9
<b>Financial Aid</b>		
Strongly Unaware	49	16.7
Unaware	111	37.8
Aware	87	29.6
Strongly Aware	47	16.0
<b>Scholarships</b>		
Strongly Unaware	51	17.3
Unaware	123	41.8
Aware	80	27.2
Strongly Aware	40	13.6

Note. <sup>a</sup> Missing values result in some variables not all adding up to the total population of 298.

### **Important factors.**

Respondents were asked how important the following factors were in considering study abroad: cost, delay in graduation, opposition from family and friends, and fear of racism. Their response options were most important, very important, somewhat important, or not a factor. See Table 12 for complete counts and percentages.

**Cost.** When surveyed if cost was an important fact when considering study abroad, a majority of respondents (60.9%) reported that cost was the most important factor. Another 32% of the respondents reported that considering the cost of study abroad was very important, and 5.4% said it was somewhat important; 1.7% reported that cost was not a factor.

**Delay to graduation.** Respondents were asked how important a delay to graduation was when considering study abroad. The majority of respondents either reported delay to graduation as most important (38.2%) or very important (32.4%), while 21.3% reported it to be somewhat a factor or not a factor (8.1%).

**Opposition from family and friends.** When asked if opposition from family and friends was considered when considering study abroad, 37.5% of the respondent population reported that opposition from family and friends was somewhat important. Although 29.1% reported it was not a factor, and the remaining indicated that it was either very important (24%) or most important (9.5%).

**Fear of racism.** The vast majority of respondents, 81.3%, felt that fear of racism was an important factor, with 35.5% responding very important, 31.2% as somewhat important, and 14.6% most important. Just over one-fifth of respondents (21.7%) reported that fear of racism was not a factor when considering study abroad.

Table 13

*Important Factors among Participants when Considering Study Abroad*<sup>a</sup>

Factors	N	%
<b>Cost</b>		
Not a Factor	5	1.7
Somewhat Important	16	5.4
Very Important	95	32.0
Most Important	181	60.9
<b>Delay Graduation</b>		
Not a Factor	24	8.1
Somewhat Important	63	21.3
Very Important	96	32.4
Most Important	113	38.2
<b>Opposition from family Friends</b>		
Not a Factor	86	29.1
Somewhat Important	111	37.5
Very Important	71	24.0
Most Important	28	9.5
<b>Fear of Racism</b>		
Not a Factor	64	21.7
Somewhat Important	92	31.2
Very Important	96	32.5
Most Important	43	14.6

Note. <sup>a</sup> Missing values result in some variables not all adding up to the total population of 298.

**Other important factors.** There were a number of important factors (see Table 14) that the respondents responded to in the survey. The above factors were consistently reported or discussed in prior research and in anecdotal discourses and the following factors were discussed briefly in the literature reviewed in Chapter 2. These factors regarding the level of import when considering study abroad were each reported as most important, very important, or somewhat important by a majority of respondents: student recommendation (91.9%), professor or advisor recommendation (96.9%), time away from on-campus studies (86.3%), time away from family and friends (83.7%), adapting to the language and culture of others (92.2%), credits to degree requirements (95.6%), health and safety (95.7%), opposition from department or advisor (75.2%), and other educational opportunities (86.6%). Despite the fact that these factors are not

prevalent in the research to date, this study suggests that they are important considerations students engage in when considering whether to study abroad.

Table 14

*Other Important Factors among Participants when Considering Study Abroad<sup>a</sup>*

Other Factors	N	%
<b>Student Recommendations</b>		
Not a Factor	24	8.1
Somewhat Important	90	30.4
Very Important	127	42.9
Most Important	55	18.6
<b>Professor or Advisor Recommendations</b>		
Not a Factor	9	3.1
Somewhat Important	59	20.0
Very Important	147	49.8
Most Important	80	27.1
<b>Time Away from On-Campus Studies</b>		
Not a Factor	40	13.7
Somewhat Important	90	30.8
Very Important	99	33.9
Most Important	63	21.6
<b>Time Away from Family/Friends</b>		
Not a Factor	48	16.3
Somewhat Important	109	36.9
Very Important	80	27.1
Most Important	58	19.7
<b>Adapting to the Language and Culture</b>		
Not a Factor	23	7.9
Somewhat Important	68	23.4
Very Important	116	39.9
Most Important	84	28.9
<b>Credits to Degree Requirements</b>		
Not a Factor	13	4.4
Somewhat Important	40	13.5
Very Important	116	39.2
Most Important	127	42.9
<b>Health and Safety</b>		
Not a Factor	13	4.4
Somewhat Important	29	9.8
Very Important	87	29.3
Most Important	168	56.6

Note. <sup>a</sup> Missing values result in some variables not all adding up to the total population of 298.



## Tests of Association

Chi-square tests of independence were performed in order to determine the extent individual characteristics related to the desire to student abroad and to determine relationships between institutional factors and respondents' desire to study abroad, as well as the relationship of individual characteristics and institutional factors between perceptions of study abroad. Lastly, chi-square tests of independence were performed to determine the relationship between the respondents' desire to study abroad and their perceptions. Non-parametric techniques were used because the data are measured on nominal (categorical) scales, and a small population and data do not meet the stringent assumptions of the parametric techniques (Pallant, 2010). I ran chi-square tests of independence because my variables had two or more categories. According to Pallant (2010), the chi-square test for independence is used when you want to explore the relationship between two categorical variables. The chi-square test of independence "compares the observed frequencies or proportions of cases that occur in each of the categories, with the values that would be expected if there was no association between the two variables being measured" (Pallant, 2010, p. 217). This test is based on a cross tabulation table. I also ran Cramer's  $V$  to determine the effect size. Cramer's  $V$  is an appropriate measure for effect size because the tables in the study are larger than 2 by 2. It was appropriate to use the following as a guide for effect size for tables with four categories: small = .06, medium = .17, and large = .29 (Pallant, 2010, p. 220). Furthermore, only statistically significant relationships accompanied with a standardized residual above  $\pm 2.00$  (Hinkle, Wiersma, & Jurs, 2002) were considered. A standardized residual ( $z$ ) that was +2.00 or higher had a positive value and indicted that more cases than expected given their distribution in the sample were observed in the category; however, a  $z$ -score of -2.00 or lower indicated that there were fewer than expected cases in a

category given the sample distribution. The alpha level was set at .05. According to Mertler and Charles (2008), a .05 probability level is traditionally accepted in research. Results of the association testing will be reported in the following sections along with tables.

### **Relationship between Demographics and Desire to Study Abroad**

I performed chi-square tests of independence to find out if there was a relationship between the respondents' demographic characteristics (i.e., gender, field of study, receive financial aid, mother's education level, father's education level, cumulative grade point average, hometown neighborhood demographics, international experience, and class standing) and the dependent variable, desire to study abroad. After running the tests, there was only one statistically significant relationship found between demographics and desire to study abroad. Field of study and desire to study abroad was statistically significant ( $\chi^2 = 20.62$ ,  $df = 5$ ,  $p = .001$ ) with an effect size of .275; however, there were fewer than five cell counts among students studying fine and applied arts and engineering. A cell count below five is a violation of assumption for chi-square tests of independence; therefore, these results will not be considered. As stated and justified using Pallant (2010), in Chapter 3, I did not combine some categories so that the greatest level of detail would be provided within the results.

### **Relationship between Institutional Factors and Desire to Study Abroad**

As discussed earlier, I wanted to find out if there was a relationship between institutional factors (i.e., advisor/faculty interactions and sources of information) and desire to study abroad. Institutional factors were operationalized with survey questions nine through 14. Specifically, the variable "sources of information" was based on the following survey question: How else have you received information about study abroad? Respondents could have selected any responses that applied: (a) study abroad office or coordinator, (b) friends, (c) departmental

college office, (d) new student orientation, (e) classroom presentation, (f) admissions representative, (g) did not receive information, or (h) other to answer the question. Below are the results of the statistically significant relationships between institutional factors and the respondents' desire to take part in study abroad programming at their current institution. Statistically significant results with a z-score of  $\pm 2.00$  are reported in the text as well as in Tables 15 and 16 below.

### **Advisor and Faculty Interaction**

I wanted to find out if there was a relationship between the respondents' interactions with their advisors and faculty (i.e., student initiated and advisor and faculty initiated) and their desire to study abroad at their current institution. Chi-square tests of independence were run and below are the statistically significant findings.

#### **Student Initiated Interactions**

*Asked advisors.* There was a significant relationship between respondents who reported *they* asked their advisor about study abroad and the respondents' desire to study abroad ( $\chi^2 = 7.67, df = 1, p = .006$ ). The effect size was .166. There were fewer than expected respondents who had asked their advisors about study abroad and who did not desire to study abroad while at their current institution ( $z = -2.3$ ).

*Asked professors.* There was a significant relationship between respondents who reported *they* asked their professors about study abroad and desire to study abroad at current institution ( $\chi^2 = 16.17, df = 1, p = .000$ ). The effect size was .240. There were two significant associations. The first, associations were attributed to those respondents who reported that they had and had not discussed study abroad with their professors. Among those who did discuss study abroad with their professors, fewer respondents than expected reported that they did not

desire to study abroad ( $z = -3.0$ ). Also, among those who reported they had not discussed study abroad with their professors, more than expected reported that they did not desire to study abroad at their current institution ( $z = 2.1$ ).

### Faculty Initiated Interactions

***Interactions with professors outside class.*** As shown in Table 15, there was a significant relationship between professors who had discussed study abroad outside the classroom and the respondents' desire to study abroad while at current institution ( $\chi^2 = 7.79$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p = .005$ ). The effect size was .169. Among respondents who reported that their professors discussed study abroad outside the classroom, fewer than expected reported that they did not desire to study abroad at their current institution ( $z = -2.2$ ).

Table 15

*Relationships between institutional factors and respondents' desire to study abroad at current institution (n = 273)<sup>a</sup>*

<i>View</i>	<i>Desire n (%)</i>	<i>No Desire n (%)</i>	$\chi^2$	<i>p</i>	<i>V</i>
Asked Advisors			7.67	.006	.166
Yes	49 (17.5)	2 (0.7)			
No	183 (65.4)	46 (16.4)			
Asked Professor			16.17	.000	.240
Yes	89 (31.8)	4 (1.4)			
No	143 (51.1)	44 (15.7)			
Professor outside class			7.79	.005	.169
Yes	69 (25.3)	5 (1.8)			
No	157 (57.5)	42 (15.4)			

*Note.* <sup>a</sup>Missing values result in some variables not all adding up to the total population of 298.

***Interactions with professors during class.*** There was a significant relationship between professors' discussion of study abroad during class and desire to study abroad ( $\chi^2 = 3.89$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p = .049$ ); however, there was no meaningful z-score. The effect size was .118.

### **Sources of Information**

Among the institutional factor variables, sources of information had a statistically significant relationship with desire to study abroad; however, a meaningful association is determined when the  $z$  value is  $\pm 2.00$  and meaningful associations were not apparent. The significant relationship was between respondents who did not receive any information on study abroad from their institution and their desire to study abroad ( $\chi^2 = 4.44$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p = .035$ ); the effect size was .126.

### **Relationship between Individual Characteristics and Perceptions**

For research question five I wanted to find out if there were significant relationships between individual characteristics and respondents' perceptions about study abroad. Survey questions 3, 7, 17, and 18 were used to answer the research question. International experience was measured using responses (i.e., yes or no) to survey questions 17 and 18. Survey questions 17 and 18 provided the respondents an opportunity to share their current and prior experiences surrounding international experiences. Respondents' perceptions of study abroad were measured with responses to survey questions three and seven. Survey question three read: "Which statement best describes your view of study abroad?" Respondents could select one of the following responses: (1) study abroad is not an option for me, (2) study abroad is not essential for me, (3) study abroad is a desirable part of the educational experience, but unrealistic in my major, or (4) study abroad is a desirable and realistic part of the educational experience. Survey question seven requested that respondents rate their view of study abroad by their level of agreement with the following statements:

1. Study abroad is important for personal development
2. Study abroad enhances the ability to think critically and solve problems

3. Study abroad helps find graduates better jobs
4. Study abroad enhances lifelong career opportunities

Respondents rated each statement by choosing one of the following four responses: strongly disagree, disagree, agree, or strongly agree.

Chi-square tests of independence were conducted to determine if there was a relationship between individual characteristics and respondents' perceptions about study abroad.

Significant relationships were found with responses from two items in survey question 17 (i.e., took more than one course on-campus with international content and studied another language). The relationship between "took more than one course on-campus with an international content" and survey question seven was significant ( $\chi^2 = 4.13$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p = .042$ ) with an effect size of .118. Additionally, there was a statistically significant relationship between "studied another language" and statements that best describe your view of study abroad ( $\chi^2 = 8.56$ ,  $df = 3$ ,  $p = .036$ ) with an effect size of .173. An association could not be determined for these significant relationships.

### **Relationship between Institutional Factors and Perceptions**

Chi-square tests of independence were performed for research question six to explore the relationship between institutional factors (i.e., advisor/faculty interactions and sources of information) and respondents' perceptions of study abroad. As shown in Table 2, there was a significant relationship between respondents who reported that their professors mentioned study abroad outside of class and the respondents' feasibility of study abroad ( $\chi^2 = 13.29$ ,  $df = 3$ ,  $p = .004$ ). The effect size was .218. Among those who reported that their professor discussed study abroad outside class, fewer than expected respondents' described their view of study abroad as not essential to them ( $z = -2.1$ ).

Table 16

*Relationship between professor discussing study abroad outside class and respondents' feasibility of study abroad (n = 280) <sup>a</sup>*

<i>View</i>	<i>Yes n (%)</i>	<i>No n (%)</i>	$\chi^2$	<i>p</i>	<i>V</i>
			13.29	.004	.218
Not an option	4 (1.4)	15 (5.4)			
Not essential	2 (0.7)	26 (9.3)			
Desirable but unrealistic	11 (3.9)	45 (16.1)			
Desirable and realistic	63 (22.5)	114 (40.7)			

*Note.* <sup>a</sup>Missing values result in some variables not all adding up to the total population of 298.

There were three other statistically significant relationships; however, an association could not be determined. There was a relationship between the following variables: professors discussing study abroad during class and view of study abroad ( $\chi^2 = 9.76$ ,  $df = 3$ ,  $p = .021$ ) with an effect size was .185; received study abroad information via departmental college office and view of study abroad ( $\chi^2 = 11.37$ ,  $df = 3$ ,  $p = .010$ ) with an effect size of .200; and did not receive information about study abroad and survey question seven ( $\chi^2 = 4.53$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p = .033$ ) with an effect size of .124.

### **Relationship between Perceptions and Desire to Study Abroad**

Lastly, for research question seven, I explored the relationship between the respondents' perceptions of study abroad and their desire to study abroad at their current institution. I performed a chi-square test of independence. After running the test, I found that the assumptions for minimum cell counts were violated. There were cell count violations in the following cells: study abroad not an option, study abroad not essential, personal development, think critically and solve problems, graduates find better jobs, and lifelong career opportunities. Consequently, these results are not reported. I also ran a non-parametric Spearman rho correlation. The relationship between the respondents' perceptions of study abroad and their desire to study abroad at their current institution was investigated using the Spearman rho correlation.

Preliminary analyses were performed to ensure no violation of the assumptions of normality, linearity, and homoscedasticity.

The results indicated there were statistical significant relationships between the variables *perceptions of study abroad* and *desire to study abroad*. Results are provided in text and in Table 16. The independent perception variable *feasibility of study abroad* had four levels (i.e., (1) study abroad is not an option for me, (2) study abroad is not essential for me, (3) study abroad is a desirable part of the educational experience, but unrealistic in my major, and (4) study abroad is a desirable and realistic part of the educational experience). In addition, to *feasibility of study abroad*, the second perception variable, *rate of agreement*, had four levels: (1) study abroad is important for personal development, (2) study abroad enhances the ability to think critically and solve problems, (3) study abroad helps find graduates better jobs, and (4) study abroad enhances lifelong career opportunities.

Each of these variables were dummy coded in order to run the Spearman rho correlation. Each perception variable was run separately against the dependent variable. The dummy coding for the variable *feasibility of study abroad* was as follows: Study abroad is not an option for me = 1; study abroad is not essential for me = 2; study abroad is a desirable part of the educational experience, but unrealistic in my major = 3; and study abroad is a desirable and realistic part of the educational experience = 4. For the variable *views of study abroad*, the following dummy codes were used: Study abroad is important for personal development = 1; study abroad enhances the ability to think critically and solve problems = 2; study abroad helps find graduates better jobs = 3; and study abroad enhances lifelong career opportunities = 4. The dependent variable “desire to study abroad” was dummy coded: 1 = yes, I desire to study abroad; 0 = no, I do not desire to study abroad. There were seven statistically significant findings.



Significant findings were found in the associations between desire to study abroad and the following feasibility items: study abroad is not an option for me ( $r = -.207, n = 274, p = .001$ ); study abroad is not essential for me ( $r = -.326, n = 274, p = .000$ ); study abroad is a desirable and realistic part of the educational experience ( $r = .391, n = 274, p = .000$ ). There was not an association between desire to study abroad and the feasibility item “study abroad is desirable but unrealistic in my major”. This indicated that there is a negative correlation with the negative feasibility items “not an option” and “not essential,” with small and medium levels of association, respectively. This also indicates there was a positive correlation with the positive feasibility item and desire to study abroad with medium levels of association.

There were also significant findings between study abroad is important for personal development ( $r = .192, n = 279, p = .001$ ), study abroad enhances the ability to think critically and solve problems ( $r = .153, n = 278, p = .010$ ), study abroad helps find graduates better jobs ( $r = .196, n = 278, p = .001$ ), and study abroad enhances lifelong career opportunities ( $r = .259, n = 273, p = .000$ ). This indicated that there is a positive correlation between variables *views of study abroad* and desire to study abroad variables, all with small levels of association.

Table 17

*Spearman Rho Correlations Between Perceptions of Study Abroad and Desire to Study Abroad*

Variables	r
Feasibility of Study Abroad	
Not an Option for Me	-.207**
Not Essential for Me	-.326***
Is a Desirable Part but Unrealistic in my Major	-.091
Desirable and Realistic Part of the Educational Experience	.391***
Views of Study Abroad	
Important for Personal Development	.192***
Enhances Critical Thinking and Problem Solving	.153**
Find Graduates Better Jobs	.196***
Enhances Lifelong Career Opportunities	.259***

Note. \* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

## Prediction Models

In order to answer the third part of research questions two and four, I used logistic regression. Logistic regression models are used to predict categorical outcomes when you have two or more categories. Pallant (2010) stated, “logistic regression allows you to assess how well your set of predictor variables predicts or explains your categorical dependent variable” (p. 171). In this study, the predictor variables for both questions were desire or did not desire to study abroad while at their current institution. The use of logistic regression requires predictor variables with three or more categories to be dummy coded into new variables with dichotomous (e.g., marked or not marked) values. This was done for four predictor variables in my study. The original variable for gender was dummy coded into “man” (1 = marked, 0 = not marked), “woman” (1 = marked, 0 = not marked), and “transgender/gender non-conforming” (1 = marked, 0 = not marked). The variable for major area of study, which, as noted earlier, was recoded into six collapsed categories due to low cell sizes, was dummy coded into “arts and sciences” (1 = marked, 0 = not marked), “business” (1 = marked, 0 = not marked), “fine arts” (1 = marked, 0 = not marked), “health professions” (1 = marked, 0 = not marked), “education” (1 = marked, 0 = not marked), “engineering” (1 = marked, 0 = not marked), “agriculture” (1 = marked, 0 = not marked), and “unknown major” (1 = marked, 0 = not marked). The original hometown neighborhood variable was dummy coded into “urban” (1 = marked, 0 = not marked), “suburban” (1 = marked, 0 = not marked), and “rural” (1 = marked, 0 = not marked). The original financial aid variable was dummy coded into “received financial aid” (1 = marked, 0 = not marked), “did not receive financial aid” (1 = marked, 0 = not marked), and “declined to answer” (1 = marked, 0 = not marked). Also, due to the problem of multicollinearity, one of each set of recoded dummy variables must not be included in the regression (Mertler &

Vannatta, 2002). To comply with this recommendation, the dummy coded variables “transgender/gender non-conforming”, “unknown major”, “rural”, and “declined to answer” were excluded from the logistic regression analysis. Additionally, there was a high degree of intercorrelation between mother’s level of education and father’s level of education; therefore, these independent variables were not included in the model. When there is a high degree of intercorrelation among predictor (independent) variables it is called multicollinearity (Pallant, 2010), this is also a violation of the assumptions for logistic regression.

### **Demographics and Desire to Study Abroad**

For the second part of research question 2, a logistic regression was performed to assess the impact of demographic characteristics (predictor variables) on the likelihood that respondents would report the desire to study abroad (dependent variable) at their current institution. The model contained six demographic characteristics (i.e., gender, field of study, financial aid status, cumulative grade point average, hometown neighborhood demographics, and international experience). The full model containing all predictors was statistically significant,  $\chi^2(17, N = 287) = 35.71, p < .05$ , indicating that the model was able to distinguish between respondents who desired and did not desire to study abroad at their current institution. The model as a whole explained 22.2% (Nagelkerke R squared) of the variance in desire to study abroad status, and correctly classified 82.6% of cases. As shown below in Table 18, only two of the predictor variables made a unique statistically significant contribution to the model (i.e., born or raised abroad and education majors). The strongest predictor of desiring to study abroad at the student’s current institution was being an education major, recording an odds ratio of 4.952. This indicated that respondents who desired to study abroad at their current institution were nearly five times more likely to major in education than those who did not major in education,

controlling for all other factors in the model. The odds ratio for respondents who were born or raised abroad was .10. Respondents who were born or raised abroad had a significant inverse relationship in choosing to desire to study abroad. Respondents who were born or raised abroad were .10 times less likely to desire to study abroad at their current institution, controlling for other factors in the model.

Table 18

*Logistic Regression Predicting the Desire to Study Abroad by Demographics*

Predictors	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>Wald</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>Odds Ratio</i>
Studied abroad	-.258	1.338	.037	1	.847	.772
Lived abroad	2.509	1.352	3.442	1	.064	12.292
Born or raised abroad	-2.327	1.120	4.321	1	.038*	.098
Hosted international	1.212	1.117	1.177	1	.278	3.361
Traveled abroad	.215	.462	.217	1	.641	1.240
Male	-24.821	40193.350	.000	1	1.000	.000
Female	-23.942	40193.350	.000	1	1.000	.000
Area of study or major						
Business	.663	.589	1.267	1	.260	1.941
Arts and Sciences	-.749	.805	.866	1	.352	.473
Health Sciences	.515	.491	1.099	1	.294	1.673
Education	1.600	.535	8.953	1	.003*	4.952
Engineer	-19.072	11467.157	.000	1	.999	.000
Urban	-.053	.711	.006	1	.941	.948
Suburban	.022	.709	.001	1	.975	1.022
Financial Aid	17.536	40192.897	.000	1	1.000	4E+007
No Financial Aid	17.029	40192.897	.000	1	1.000	2E+007
Constant	1.447	56841.869	.000	1	1.00	4.250

*Note.* Nagelkerke  $R^2$  is .207, \* $p < .05$

### **Institutional Factors and Desire to Study Abroad**

For research question 4, a logistic regression was performed to assess the impact of institutional factors (predictor variables) on the likelihood that respondents would report that they desired to study abroad (dependent variable) at their current institution. Institutional factors included sources of information and the respondents' interaction with their advisors and faculty. Responses from survey question 12, how have you received information about study abroad,

were used for analysis. The respondents could select all that applied from the following: (a) study abroad office or coordinator, (b) friends, (c) departmental college office, (d) new student orientation, (e) classroom presentation, (f) admissions representative, (g) did not receive information, or (h) other to answer the question. Additionally, survey questions 9 through 11, 13, and 14 were yes or no questions regarding the respondents' interactions with their advisor or professors.

The full model containing all predictors was statistically significant,  $\chi^2(14, N = 266) = 33.54, p < .05$ , indicating that the model was able to distinguish between respondents who desired and did not desire to study abroad while at their current institution. The model as a whole explained 19.7% (Nagelkerke R squared) of the variance in desire to study abroad at their current institution, and correctly classified 89.6% of cases. As shown below in Table 4, only two of the predictor variables made a unique, statistically significant contribution to the model (i.e., advisors discussed academic planning for study abroad and have you ever asked your professor about study abroad). The strongest predictor of desire to study abroad at current institution was respondents who reported that they asked their professor about study abroad, recording an odds ratio of 4.89. This indicated that respondents who desire to study abroad at their current institution were nearly five times more likely to report that they discussed study abroad with their professor than those who reported they did not discuss study abroad with their professor, controlling for all other factors in the model. The odds ratio for respondents whose advisor discussed academic planning for study abroad was .15, indicating a significant inverse relationship for respondents whose advisor discussed academic planning. Respondents who reported that their advisor discussed academic planning for study abroad were .15 times less

likely to desire to study abroad at their current institution than those who advisor did not discuss academic planning.

Table 19

*Logistic Regression Predicting the Desire to Study Abroad by Institutional Factors*

Predictors	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>Wald</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>Odds Ratio</i>
<b>Sources of information</b>						
Study Abroad Office/Coordinator	-.131	.562	.054	1	.816	.878
Friends	.667	.432	2.378	1	.123	1.948
Department or College	-.410	.515	.633	1	.426	.664
New Study Orientation	.030	.684	.002	1	.964	1.031
Study Abroad presentation	-.003	.582	.000	1	.995	.997
Admissions	-.339	.749	.205	1	.651	.713
Did not receive	.471	.549	.737	1	.391	1.601
<b>Other</b>						
Adviser discussed study abroad	.543	.841	.416	1	.519	1.720
Adviser discussed academic planning	-1.930	.901	4.588	1	.032*	.145
<b>Professor mentioned study abroad</b>						
During class	-.158	.453	.121	1	.728	.854
Outside of class	.793	.702	1.276	1	.259	2.210
Respondent asked adviser	1.137	.821	1.919	1	.166	3.118
Respondent asked professor	1.588	.657	5.835	1	.016*	4.894
Constant	-5.321	2.231	5.687	1	.017	.005

*Note.* Nagelkerke  $R^2$  is .207, \* $p < .05$

### Summary of Findings

There were significant findings ( $p < .05$ ) among the tests of association and prediction models across the various aspects of this study, both among individual characteristics variables as well as institutional factor variables. For association testing, only statistically significant relationships accompanied with a standardized residual above  $\pm 2.00$  were considered.

There were four significant relationships found among the institutional factors. First, there was a significant relationship between respondents who initiated conversations with their advisor and respondents who initiated conversations their professors about study abroad with the respondents' desire to study abroad. Fewer students than expected who asked their advisors

about study abroad did not desire to study abroad. As for those students who did ask their professors about study abroad, fewer students than expected did not desire to study abroad, although those who had not discussed study abroad with their professor, more than expected reported they did not desire to study abroad. Lastly, there was a significant relationship between professors who initiated conversations about study abroad with the respondents outside class and the respondents' desire to study abroad. Among these students, fewer than expected reported that they did not desire to study abroad while attending their current institution. Using Spearman Rho correlation, I found a relationship between respondents' perceptions of the feasibility and views of study abroad and desire to study abroad. Overall, there were positive correlations between the variables.

I also used a logistic regression model to explore if individual characteristics and institutional factors can predict the respondents' desire to study abroad at their current institution. I was able to determine that respondents who were born or raised abroad were less likely to desire to study abroad. Further, I found that education majors were more likely to desire to study abroad than those not in the field of education. Additionally, I was able to determine that respondents who initiated discussions about study abroad with their professors were more likely to desire to study abroad. However, I was also able to determine that respondents whose advisors initiated conversations about study abroad were less likely to desire to study abroad.

## CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION

In this dissertation, I used a survey research design to explore the perceptions and characteristics of the respondent population of Black undergraduates attending four historically Black colleges and universities. In this chapter, I will answer each research question, discuss implications for practice and future research, and address the limitations of this research.

I was most surprised with two results. First, a vast number of respondents desired to study abroad at their current institution. Second, a high number of respondents viewed study abroad as a desirable and realistic part of their educational experience. I did not anticipate such a strong desire towards studying abroad among the sample for this study based on my personal experiences and the current literature. These findings reinforce that there is a need for further research specifically on Black participation in study abroad at HBCUs and on the state of study abroad programming at HBCUs.

### **Summary of Research Questions**

I asked seven questions in order to explore the perceptions of study abroad among Black undergraduates attending HBCUs and to describe the respondent population at the selected HBCUs. I collected descriptive characteristics from 298 Black undergraduates attending Norfolk State University, Kentucky State University, Wilberforce University, and Xavier College of Louisiana during the 2011 spring and summer semesters. Through my research I described perceptions and important factors regarding study abroad for my respondents, reported findings of statistically significant relationships between institutional factors and respondents' desire to study abroad, and identified individual and institutional factors that were significant in predicting the likelihood that respondents would desire to study abroad while attending their current institution.



### **Perceptions and Important Factors.**

For my first research question, I explored the perceptions of study abroad among Black undergraduates at selected HBCUs. I asked eight survey questions regarding perceptions of study abroad, which included over 30 items. Respondents overwhelmingly agreed or strongly agreed that personal development, critical and problem solving skills, better jobs, and lifelong career opportunities were important outcomes when considering studying abroad. These findings support prior research, which found that personal development, critical and problem solving skills, better jobs, and lifelong career opportunities are all benefits or potential outcomes of studying abroad (Carlson, Burn, Useem, and Yachimowicz, 1990; Sandell, 2007; Craig, 2009; Martinez, Ranjeet, & Marz, 2009). These Black undergraduates perceived the benefits of study abroad that have been reported in the literature.

In the current literature, cost, delay to graduation, opposition from family and friends, and fear of racism were factors that were widely agreed upon as important barriers for students considering studying abroad (Carroll, 1996; Washington, 1998; Consuelo-Clemens, 2002; & McLellan, 2007). Consistent with the current research, these factors were also identified by students as important factors to consider and could be contributing to the underrepresentation of Blacks in study abroad programs in my study. Although these factors may impact participation in study abroad, the majority of the respondents perceived study abroad as a desirable and realistic part of the educational experience. There is a gap between perceived feasibility and actual participation. Further research is needed to better understand why there is a gap between the positive perceived feasibility of study abroad and the participation of respondents in study abroad.

**Individual Characteristics.**

My second research question explored the individual characteristics of the respondent population at the four participating HBCUs. Gender, field of study, and class standing were the specific characteristics covered in the literature and in the current study. In this study, 8.2% of respondents studied abroad while attending their current institution; however, this percentage can be misleading when put side by side with the national statistic (4.7%) for participation among Blacks in study abroad. My figures cannot be compared to national statistics because they do not correspond to the proportion of study abroad participation among the total Black student population at these four HBCUs or to Blacks attending all HBCUs. Moreover, I did not set out to compare my findings with national data. Additionally, the national data aggregate participation across institutional categories; national participation rates for Blacks at HBCUs are not reported. Yet another factor to consider when assessing the total percentage of respondents who studied abroad is that they each self-selected to participate. Self-selection is common in social science research and should be acknowledged as a possible limitation. Further research is needed; however, steps must be taken in order to minimize self-selection bias. This will be addressed later in this chapter. Additional research could also include comparing Black undergraduate participation rates at HBCUs with national participation rates of Blacks. Future researchers could locate pre-existing data on participation rates across HBCUs. Pre-existing data coupled with an assessment instrument could assist researchers in exploring differences among Black undergraduates who study abroad at HBCUs and non-HBCUs.

Comparable with overall gender participation in study abroad, my study found that the majority of respondents who desired to study abroad were women. This finding is similar to current data (IIE, 2011) stating that women continue to participate at a much higher rate than

men. According to Stearns (2009), women consistently account for over 60% of all study abroad participation for over the past decade.

Education majors were more likely than non-education majors to desire to study abroad at their current institution; however, the plurality of respondents who had studied abroad majored in the arts and sciences (29.2%). Education majors who had studied abroad, among the respondents, only represented 8.3% of those who have studied abroad. These findings are similar with the latest trend of majors studying abroad nationally. According to *Open Doors 2011*, social sciences (22%) are the leading field of study among Americans studying abroad (IIE, 2011). Conversely, those in education accounted for only 4% of participation in study abroad during the 2009/2010 academic year (IIE, 2011). Another interesting finding in this study was that the second leading field who had studied abroad were health science majors (25%); whereas, the national trend reported that business and management majors have been the second highest participating majors studying abroad (IIE, 2011). Although there are similar trends in majors leading in study abroad, future research is recommended to explore the differences among majors and why majoring in education significantly predicted study abroad participation among this sample.

Lastly, published research data have indicated that most students participate in study abroad during their junior year (Goodwin & Nacht, 1988; IIE, 2011). Among the respondents who indicated that they had not studied abroad but desired to do so, the majority were juniors and seniors. Drawing from data and the current literature, it is logical to believe that many of the respondents will not participate in study abroad during their tenure at their current institution or the population will participate in study abroad during a time period different than found in previous research. A longitudinal research design could address this phenomenon and

potentially uncover if individual or institutional factors identified in this study play a role in whether respondents actually study abroad or not.

#### **Association of Individual Characteristics and Desire to Study Abroad.**

The second part of research question two examined the relationships between individual characteristics (i.e., gender, field of study, receive financial aid, mother's education level, father's education level, cumulative grade point average, hometown neighborhood demographics, international experience, and class standing) and respondents' desire to study abroad at their current institution. Due to low cell counts and potentially too small of a sample, my results did not indicate any statistically significant findings. Further research is needed to determine if there are more meaningful relationships between individual characteristics among Black undergraduates who attend HBCUs and their desire to study abroad. A larger sample will not guarantee statistically significant findings; however, a more representative sample of HBCUs and larger number of Black student respondents could provide additional data that could be tested without violating the test's assumptions. These findings could potentially provide college administrators with insights that allow for a better understanding of how individual characteristics play a role in a student's desire to study abroad.

#### **Predictive Power of Individual Characteristics and Desire to Study Abroad.**

The third part of research question two was aimed at discovering to what extent individual characteristics (i.e., gender, field of study, receipt of financial aid, mother's education level, father's education level, cumulative grade point average, hometown neighborhood demographics, international experience, and class standing) predict the desire of respondents' to study abroad while at their current institution. There were two significant findings. First logistic

regression found a statistically significant relationship between education majors and desire to study abroad. The relationship of this finding to the current literature has been discussed above.

Secondly, respondents who were born or raised abroad were less likely to desire to study abroad than those who were not born or raised abroad. It would appear that respondents who were born or raised abroad may not have the desire to leave the country. Individuals who were born or raised abroad may already perceive themselves as possessing the skills to navigate within cultures different than their own. They may speak more than one world language and they may embrace worldly perspectives, along with other benefits associated with studying abroad (Goodwin & Nacht, 1988; Carlson et al., 1990; and Picard et al., 2009). As a result, their desire to obtain the benefits or experiences associated with studying abroad maybe blunted because of the perception that they already possess the benefits. Additionally, with their experiences abroad, they could serve as a peer-to-peer motivators or marketing agents. If these students share their lived experiences abroad, other students could be encouraged to study abroad. This might assist with cutting down on the fear of the unknown as well as the diminishing the affects of other barriers that could circumvent study abroad participation.

#### **Association between Institutional Factors and Desire to Study Abroad.**

For my third research question, I attempted to determine if there was a significant relationship between institutional factors (i.e., sources of information and advisor and faculty interaction) and respondents' desire to study abroad at their current institution. Carroll (1996) and Washington (1988) found lack of information and lack of awareness to be barriers among African American students considering study abroad. In this study I do not have specific information concerning the conversations faculty and advisors had with their students. However, there were significant relationships between students initiating conversations with their

professors and advisors and professors discussing study abroad outside the classroom. The culture at HBCUs is known for having intimate and familial relationships with their students. Despite this, Shih (2009) posited that these institutions often have fewer professors with international experiences; therefore, they are less likely to encourage students to study abroad. Shih (2009) also reported that minority students at smaller institutions lack information and motivation to study abroad. In this study, it appears students lack information but not motivation. The majority of respondents reported that they were unaware or strongly unaware of key sources of information (i.e., options in major, financial aid, and scholarships) that are important when considering studying abroad. However, there appears to be a considerable level of motivation given that the majority of respondents desired to study abroad and viewed it as desirable and realistic. As stated earlier, there appears to be a disconnect between motivation and participation in study abroad. Again, this can be contributed to the lack of information available at the participating HBCUs.

#### **Predictive Power of Institutional Factors and Desire to Study Abroad.**

For my fourth research question, I explored to what extent institutional factors (i.e., sources of information, advisor and faculty interaction, and international opportunities) predict the respondents' desire to study abroad at their current institution. There were two statistically significant institutional factors that predicted the respondents' desire to study abroad at their current institution.

The first institutional factor that predicted the likelihood of desire to study abroad was advisor and faculty interaction. Respondents who reported they asked their professors about study abroad desired to study abroad more than those who did not ask their professors about study abroad. Again this finding is linked to previous researched focused on faculty and student

interaction and knowledge sharing. Hser (2005) posited that many faculty members perceived study abroad as enriching, yet some have the impression that it interferes with their students' personal lives, disrupts their academic quality, and postpones graduation.

In addition to the predictive findings in this study, nearly fifty percent of the respondents reported that their professor and advisor's recommendations were very important when considering studying abroad. In addition, respondents also considered delay in graduation as an important factor when considering studying abroad. It appears that faculty and some of the respondents shared similar perceptions about the role and impact study abroad could make on their student academic career; however, when asked in this survey, the majority of students reported that study abroad was a desirable and realistic opportunity. It is also plausible, as detailed in previous research, to propose that students who desire to study abroad are more likely to discuss study abroad with faculty, staff, and peers.

The second institutional factor that predicted the likelihood of desire to study abroad was respondents who reported that their advisor discussed academic planning with them were less likely to desire to study abroad. This finding is puzzling because lack of information about study abroad is heavily reported as a barrier among Black undergraduates considering study abroad (Carroll, 1996; Hembroff & Rusz, 1993; Shih, 2005; Washington, 1998). My findings are inconclusive. There could be specific information that advisors are sharing with students regarding academic planning that includes study abroad; however, the survey did not ask for that level of detail. Future research is warranted in order to obtain narrative data regarding specific conversations respondents and their advisors are having about study abroad. It is reasonable to suggest that since advisors initiated the conversation they could have discussed academic planning with respondents who simply did not desire to study abroad. It is logical that

respondents in this group were less likely to study abroad because some never desire to do so prior to engaging in conversations with their advisor. However, it is also possible that study abroad is not an aspect of the institutional culture at these HBCUs, so advisors may not include study abroad in academic planning discussions unless it is mentioned by the student.

### **Individual Characteristics and Perceptions about Study Abroad.**

My fifth research question explores the significant relationships between individual characteristics (i.e., gender, field of study, receive financial aid, mother's education level, father's education level, cumulative grade point average, hometown neighborhood demographics, international experience, and class standing) and respondents' perceptions about study abroad. I was surprised that the only individual characteristic that was statistically significant was international experience. Yet, although international experience was statistically significant, a meaningful association was not determined; therefore caution must be taken when interpreting this finding. I did not expect that only one characteristic would be statistically significant. Some demographic and individual characteristic variables have been reported as significant findings in prior research. Barker (2000) and Grynspan (2007) found that field of study played an important role in whether a student participated in study abroad. They also reported that the curriculum and course sequences in science, medicine, or technology curriculum were too rigid for students to consider studying abroad with ease. Hembroff and Rusz (1993) found that African Americans were less represented in the arts and letter majors. In this study Arts and Letter majors, coded as arts and sciences, represented a large number of study abroad students. Furthermore, Booker (2001) found that there was a significant association between applicants and non-applicants and gender in her study. Consuelo-Clemens (2002) also reported significant findings with some individual characteristics. She found that gender,



father's education, mother's education, and parent's salary each had an association with students of color considering study abroad. As a researcher, I had to consider the variety of studies and how they were designed and executed. My results differed from previous studies because similar populations or research designs were not duplicated. However, I did use similar demographic and individual characteristic variables to test for associations and predictions. Therefore, it is understandable why the results of this study differ from previous studies. Further research would be useful in exploring if there are more statistically meaning relationships between the demographic and individual characteristics among Blacks attending HBCUs and their perceptions about study abroad. This could be discovered by duplicating a previous study.

#### **Institutional Factors and Perceptions about Study Abroad.**

My sixth research question I explored the relationship between institutional factors (i.e., sources of information and advisor and faculty interaction) and respondents' perceptions of study abroad. There was a significant relationship between respondents who reported that their professors mentioned study abroad outside class and the feasibility of study abroad. Although my findings show that the majority of respondents viewed study abroad as a desirable and realistic part of the educational experience, only 27.1 percent of respondents reported that their professors discussed study abroad outside the classroom. Most students desired to study abroad whether or not they received information from their professors. I did not gather data on the number of faculty with international experiences, nor did I specifically ask what type of information the respondents received from their professors regarding studying abroad. Further research is needed to determine if a professor's specific international experience or the type of information they communicated would be a significant factor in a student's desire to study abroad.

All four of these institutions would be classified as small in size relative to all higher education institutions in the U.S. These findings may be consistent with previous research regarding faculty size at smaller institutions. According to Shih (2009), smaller institutions have fewer faculty who have international experiences. As a result, faculty members are less likely to encourage or even discuss study abroad options with their students without having international experiences. Recruiting more faculty members at smaller schools who have international experience would overcome that limitation. Increase in faculty with international experiences coupled with a culture of high student-faculty interactions could serve as a winning benefit for Black undergraduates considering study abroad at HBCUs. An increase in the number of international faculty or domestic faculty that pursued professional development opportunities abroad could increase the knowledge shared between faculty and students regarding studying abroad or other international educational opportunities.

#### **Perceptions about Study Abroad and Desire to Study Abroad.**

My seventh research question explored the relationship between the respondents' perceptions of study abroad and their desire to study abroad while attending their current institution. My findings did not indicate a statistically significant relationship between respondent perceptions of study abroad and their desire to study abroad at their current institution using the chi-square test of independence. Using the Spearman Rho correlation, I did find statistically significant correlations between respondent perceptions and their desire to study abroad.

In this study, findings were similar to a previous study (Washington, 1998), suggesting that finance, family, and level of awareness are major factors considered among African American undergraduates considering study abroad while attending a HBCU. I was not

surprised that there was a relationship between the respondents' perceptions and their desire to study abroad. Researchers found several factors that have impacted Black undergraduates' desire to study abroad. Many of these factors were based on their perceptions of study abroad, including cross-cultural anxieties, levels of awareness about study abroad, lack of prior international travel, and funding (Carroll, 1996; Hembroff & Rusz, 1993; Washington, 1998). The one caveat to my findings is that unlike previous studies, I did not use barriers to predict desire to study abroad. Perceptions in this study were measured by the respondent's view of the feasibility study abroad and how they rated the outcomes of study abroad at their institution. I found a positive correlation between these perceptions of study abroad and desire to study abroad.

### **Implications for Practice**

Faculty, staff, and institutional factors play a significant role in the desire Black undergraduates attending HBCUs have in study abroad programs. Additionally, the respondent population's individual characteristics and perceptions of study abroad lend credence to how these students consider and view study abroad. This section will provide several implications for practice.

As discussed in my literature review, Washington (1998) found that African American undergraduates at a historically Black college reported awareness and lack of interest as significant factors for not participating in study abroad programs. In this study, I found that lack of awareness was a key factor, similar to findings in prior research. What was intriguing was that the majority of respondents also reported that study abroad was a desirable and realistic part of their education. This finding is intriguing because it juxtaposes desire and information. Respondents who lack information about study abroad still find it desirable and realistic. This

speaks to the true desires of the respondent sample. There appears to be hope related to pursuing study abroad at their specific HBCU. Again, I acknowledge that my respondent population self-selected to participate in this study; regardless these findings still indicate that there is a population of Black undergraduates at HBCUs that have interest and desire to study abroad. Given the low cost of on-line surveys, it is reasonable that HBCUs could conduct a student survey of interest in study abroad to gather more information about the particular needs and desires of their student body regarding study abroad programs. This should serve as a foundation to increasing awareness and developing the tools and resources to increase participation.

Washington (1998) also found that finances were a significant factor among African Americans at a predominantly White institution as well as at one historically Black college when considering studying abroad. Additionally, Hembroff and Rusz (1993) found that socioeconomic factors played a role in the underrepresentation of African Americans in study abroad programs. Increased financial awareness is one way to address the underrepresentation of Blacks in study abroad programs. Rhodes and Hong (2009) purported that many “who can benefit from study abroad lack the information, resources, and support for study abroad that can motivate participation (p. 1). Providing information to grants and scholarships is necessary to address the concern that the majority of my respondents had regarding cost, financing, and financial aid for study abroad.

I did not find a significant relationship between financial aid status and desire to study abroad; however, it is important to acknowledge my descriptive findings related to funding. In my study, 89.6% of the respondents reported they received some form of financial aid (i.e., grants, scholarships, or federal loans). In addition, over 60% reported that cost was the most important factor when considering study abroad. This information coupled with the fact that the

majority of the respondents also shared that they were unaware or strongly unaware that financial aid should be used for study abroad and that there were scholarships available for studying abroad programs are problematic. It is necessary that HBCUs do a better job of making resources and information available for their students to have a better chance at gaining knowledge about study abroad and learning how to finance a trip. Providing links on the university financial aid webpage about scholarships and links to available federal funding should provide Black students at HBCUs the financial options needed to consider studying abroad.

My study also suggests that an awareness and appreciation of international education is essential among faculty and administrators primarily because faculty and staff play a significant role in assisting students to realize their desires to study abroad. With their support more students may pursue studying abroad. This ability to have an impact on students may call for HBCUs to increase opportunities for faculty and staff to study abroad or to recruit more faculty and staff with prior international experience. Historically Black colleges and universities may also seek to hire international faculty and staff in efforts to diversify their faculties, which would allow them to relate more to those considering studying abroad. Further, institutional missions and visions should include language specific to international education. This language should be incorporated into the curriculum and in student services to ensure students have the opportunity to receive or find information (i.e., financial aid, scholarships, credits, and various programs) on study abroad programming.

The Academy for Educational Development was created to “ensure that all American undergraduate students have an equal opportunity to participate in a quality education abroad program (Herrin, 2007, p.3). In this study, I found multiple associations between institutional factors and desire to study abroad. Specifically, there were significant relationships between

respondents who asked their advisor and professors about study abroad and their desire to study abroad and a relationship between professors who had discussed study abroad outside the classroom and desire to study abroad. Additionally, I was able to predict that respondents who reported they asked their professor about study abroad were nearly five times more likely to desire to study abroad than those who did not report they asked their professor about study abroad.

Providing equal opportunity to information should start early. In this study, the plurality of respondents only had an average understanding of study abroad at their specific institution. I recommend that these institutions begin information sharing as early as first-year orientation. This early exposure would begin the process of information sharing, not only for the student but also for their families. Early awareness is important because students and their families should develop more familiarity with study abroad programs and staff should also assist in debunking commonly known myths about study abroad. Additionally, early orientation to study abroad programs should reduce anxiety or address commonly known barriers or factors of concerns such as fear of racism, time to graduation, and funding.

Marketing and outreach during the first two years will also be critical to increasing awareness of and participation in study abroad programs among Blacks attending HBCUs. My study showed that 62.5% of my respondent population did not know that study abroad could be used as credit towards graduation and nearly 50% reported they were unaware that study abroad was an option for their major. Marketing materials should address how earning international credits could transfer into majors. Materials should be provided within each college or to academic advisors regarding course options abroad and its transferability into the student's major or degree plan.

Outreach should be done by Black undergraduates who studied abroad and faculty and staff across all fields. This approach may encourage students from underrepresented majors to consider participating in study abroad. Study abroad needs to be presented as a valuable and integral part of the higher education experience among practitioners and policymakers by encouraging and supporting faculty and staff in pursuing international experiences. Carroll (1996) found that faculty awareness of study abroad was a factor among students considering study abroad. In my study, it was found that there was a positive relationship between respondent perception of study abroad and the desire to study abroad while attending their current institution. Faculty and staff with international experiences or those with some form of professional development involving the internationalization of higher education will be better able to educate their students about the benefits of study abroad.

As discussed earlier, education majors were nearly five times more likely to desire to study abroad than those not majoring in education, yet, education majors did not comprise a plurality or majority of the respondents who had studied abroad in my sample. It is possible that the course and experiential requirements that accompany majoring in education are seen as prohibitive to participating in study abroad. Therefore, I would recommend that professionals at HBCUs replicate this study with their own student population to evaluate the representation of majors among students studying abroad. I would also recommend that study abroad professionals work closely with faculty across majors to develop academic plans that would allow students from a variety of majors, particularly education, to be able to participate in study abroad.

The second finding that was surprising was that respondents who were born or raised abroad were significantly .10 times less likely to desire to study abroad. There was no evidence

in my literature review regarding immigrant students. Future research is needed to better understand the perspectives these students have towards study abroad. Yet, there could be a number of factors to consider when discussing study abroad to students who were born or raised abroad. The first factor to acknowledge is that students who reported who they were born or raised abroad could consider their current experience in the United States of America as studying abroad; therefore, any conversation regarding study abroad could be ineffective. The second factor is that they are already living in a culture different than their own. Finally, they may possess the skills to speak a different world language. Each of these factors are benefits attributed to studying abroad (Akande & Slawson, 2000; Carlson et. al.; Kitsantas, 2004; Sandell, 2007), so the likelihood of respondents who have emigrated to the United States to desire to study abroad in order to reap these benefits would be moot.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

This study has shown that Black undergraduates at the selected HBCUs desire to study abroad, yet the majority of juniors and seniors have not studied abroad while at their current institution. This study explored the overall perceptions of study abroad among the respondents. Although there were some significant findings, further research is needed to formulate themes unique to the experiences of Black students considering studying aboard at HBCUs. One respondent shared the following via e-mail:

As an African-American female student at a HBCU who has tried to study abroad, I have a feeling that HBCUs want Black students to study abroad but they lack the information to do so. Through my own experience and the experiences of my peers, we found it a hassle to find information related to different study abroad program options, financial aid resources, and how credits would transfer. When I decided to study abroad I had no clue



how to even begin looking for a program or how to pay for it. I was given the run around from one office to the next. I was told to do one thing or the other without anything getting accomplished. I was stuck with not being able to take my trip to France this summer to study [French] because I was told financial aid was not available in the summer, a month before I had planned to leave and after my non-refundable deposit was paid to the abroad institution. I was highly frustrated and disappointed. I also heard stories similar to mine from other students at Black institutions including my own. I feel very strongly about study abroad because the world is much larger than your hometown and it has so much more to offer you. I believe you can come back with a better outlook on your academic career and will be better able to interact with different people when you enter the workforce, hence expanding your career opportunities. (Anonymous Xavier student, personal communication, June 4, 2011)

A personal story like this enhances the data found in this study and many others (i.e., lack of information, lack of faculty awareness, and issues with funding). Qualitatively investigating Black undergraduates at HBCUs would aid in illuminating the unique experiences of Black undergraduates considering studying abroad at HBCUs, and such investigations would go a long way toward contextualizing the very complex nature of the relationships suggested by the data already published. Exploration of this phenomenon from a constructivist perspective could assist study abroad administrators and campus leaders in improving their practices and increasing study abroad participation among their student body.

Second, future research is needed to determine if these results could be generalized to all or other HBCUs. Another survey study that included at least 10% of all HBCUs could provide an appropriate representation of HBCUs and their students. A larger sample size of institutions

and their students would allow for not only the ability to generalize to the larger population of HBCUs, but it would also permit an opportunity to conduct some comparison across institutions and databases (i.e., HBCUs, PWIs, and the IIE). In addition, utilizing a longitudinal survey could capture more than a student's desire to study abroad. A longitudinal survey design collects data from the same group over months or years, and such a design would provide data on whether or not students actually studied abroad and how they came to their decision.

Third, I would include all undergraduates attending HBCUs in future research. The current study only considered Black students. Historically Black colleges and universities' student populations are becoming more racially and ethnically diverse. A survey of all students could be appropriate in considering how all students' perceive study abroad opportunities at historically Black colleges and universities throughout the United States. It would be important to see how offices of study abroad at HBCUs and the structure of the programs are perceived among all students. In the end, a more inclusive population would be helpful in illuminating the data collected on the institutional factors examined in this study.

Best practices, program development, and policies play an integral role in the delivery of knowledge and information for prospective study abroad participants. A final suggestion for future research to better understand the experiences of Black undergraduates pursuing studying abroad at HBCUs could focus on the experiences, policies, and practices of study abroad professionals at HBCUs. A qualitative study on a sample of study abroad professionals at HBCUs would be beneficial in pursuing a deeper understanding of how these professionals shape study abroad opportunities, perceptions, and participation on their campuses. A qualitative study would include interviews with directors and coordinators, document analysis and focus groups with students who have visited the offices.

## Limitations

This study had four notable limitations. First, web-based surveys have low cost and time requirements; however, a limitation to this mode of delivery is that “many people are not comfortable using websites or sending personal information over the Internet” (Mertler & Charles, 2008, p. 227). Additionally, web-based surveys have low response rates compared to surveys delivered via direct administration. My study had a 10% response rate. According to Mertler and Charles (2008) survey research studies, a common recommendation is to sample approximately 10 to 20 percent of the population (p. 128). Direct administration could have increased the response rate; however, cost and time would have increased tremendously.

Second, delivery of the online survey varied. Norfolk allowed me to post a link of the on-line survey through their e-News. Their reasoning was that they wanted all their students, regardless of race or ethnicity, to have access to the survey. Kentucky and Xavier provided me with the e-mail addresses of all their Black undergraduates, and I sent out the cover letter and link to the survey directly to those students. Kentucky’s list of emails included both campus and non-campus e-mail addresses. I received e-mail addresses associated with the institution, as well as e-mail addresses from e-mail providers such as the State of Kentucky, Yahoo, and Google to name a few. At Wilberforce, the dean of students sent an e-mail with the link to the survey to all Black undergraduates. All institutions except Wilberforce had at least two reminders to complete the survey. The variability of e-mail addresses at Kentucky and mode of delivery and failure to send reminder emails to Wilberforce students could have affected the response rate. Overall, Wilberforce had the lowest response rate among participating institutions. It is possible that had their students received reminder emails they could have had a higher response rate. Although I initially was concerned that Norfolk would have a much lower response rate given

the indirect recruitment method used, they actually turned out to comprise the majority of the respondents who completed the survey. I encourage researchers to consider e-News placements at institutions where students actively read and act upon notices placed there.

Third, purposive sampling was used to select which HBCUs I wanted to participate in this study. As mentioned in my methodology chapter, I was interested in HBCUs that varied in size, funding status, and other institutional characteristics. I was not able to secure an elite HBCU such as Howard University, North Carolina Agricultural & Technical State University, or Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University for my study. Including such large elite institutions would have allowed for a more reflective representation of HBCUs. Specifically, repeating this study with elite institutions may result in greater understanding of Black undergraduates' perceptions of study abroad among a more representative cross-section of HBCUs. As discussed in Chapter three, my attempts to send the online survey out to additional institutions were either ignored or declined. Moreover, some institutions required that I secure a faculty or administrator as a co-researcher in order to conduct research with their students. My lack of connections with faculty or administrators at HBCUs posed issues for completing this research within my desired timeline. I would recommend to future researchers that they start recruiting institutional actors early in the research process. It would have been more helpful if I had a stronger networking system in place to navigate the unique culture of HBCUs.

The last limitation for this study was the effect self-selection bias could have had on my data collection. Data for my study showed that the vast majority of respondents desired to study abroad at their current institution, possibly reflecting self-selection bias. Respondents who were naturally interested or desired to study abroad would more than likely opt to participate in this study. Caution must be practiced when using my findings. Self-selection could be minimized in

the future by using random sampling techniques to collect data. According to Mertler and Charles (2008) “random sampling is the best way to obtain a representative sample”. This type of sampling technique could attract a more diverse group of students (i.e., those interested in study abroad and those not interested in study abroad) to participate in a similar study.

### **Summary**

Study abroad, internationalization, and globalization are all buzz words that are incorporated in our daily lives, especially on today’s college campuses including historically Black colleges and universities. Historically Black colleges and universities are increasingly joining conversations about the benefits of international education and programs such as study abroad. The internationalization of HBCUs will not only add value to these historic institutions, but their student body will greatly benefit from the long-term effects studying abroad can offer. Yet due to some systematic and institutional concerns, many of these institutions are forced to focus on greater issues such as institutional funding and survival. Those who are able would be well served to begin to develop strategies to develop study abroad programs that are marketed well and integrated into the curriculum.

Overall, Blacks attending the selected HBCUs viewed studying abroad as a desirable and realistic part of the educational experience; however, within this same group the majority of respondents had not studied abroad. This study suggests that institutional factors such as faculty and advisor interactions and sources of information were key factors in the students’ desire to study abroad, and HBCUs must find a way to tap into and build upon the existing desire of their students. The history of HBCUs cannot be ignored when considering the findings of this study and internationalization of HBCUs. The majority of HBCUs were established to educate Blacks who were once denied access to a higher education due to segregation and other political

motives. Moreover, they have focused on helping students succeed and graduate in spite of the odds against them. This focus on the basics may make HBCUs hesitant to place a great deal of resources into what may be perceived to be a luxury entitlement, like study abroad. HBCUs may not realize the high degree of desire to participate in study abroad that may exist among their students as these findings suggest. Therefore, patience and fortitude should be exercised when conducting research with these exceptional institutions. The most important point to take away from this study is that the students at these schools are ready to explore the world and be a part of an ever growing international community. It is our duty as higher education educators to help them realize these goals.

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**APPENDIX A: Invitation to Study**

March 23, 2011

Dear,

My name is Nikki Gaines and I am a doctoral student in the Higher Education Administration program at Bowling Green State University (BGSU). The proposed title of my dissertation is *Perceptions of Study Abroad among African American Undergraduates at Historically Black Colleges and Universities*. After gaining approval from BGSU's Human Subjects Research Board (HSRB) my goal is to begin collecting data in mid April 2011. The purpose of this study is two-fold: (1) to explore African American undergraduates the perceptions, thoughts, and attitudes of study abroad programs at HBCU and (2) to document individual and institutional characteristics that are significant factors in African American undergraduates participation in study abroad programs. I plan on administering a web-based SNAP survey to African American undergraduates at selected HBCUs via email.

I am requesting your assistance in providing me the email addresses of your current African American undergraduates at your institution. If you do not feel comfortable sending a list of e-mail addresses, I would need your assistance sending out the e-mail invitations. At this time I am interested in knowing if you would be willing to assist me with my dissertation research. **Please indicate your response via email to [gainesn@bgsu.edu](mailto:gainesn@bgsu.edu) by Friday, March 25, 2011.** Please know that your email response is fundamental documentation for the research process. Your willingness to support my research efforts is greatly appreciated and I would like to thank you in advance for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Nykia D. Gaines  
Doctoral Student, Higher Education Administration  
Bowling Green State University  
[gainesn@bgsu.edu](mailto:gainesn@bgsu.edu)  
616-443-7282

BGSU HSRB – APPROVED FOR USE  
ID# H11D204GX2  
Effective: 04/08/2011  
Expires: 03/31/2012

## **APPENDIX B: Informed Consent**

### Informed Consent Information

Thank you for your interest and willingness to assist me in my dissertation. You were selected to participate in this survey because your input can assist in better understanding the views of studying abroad among undergraduates at historically Black colleges and universities and to provide educators at your institution with information regarding their current practices with study abroad programs.

The purpose of my research is to explore student's perceptions toward study abroad while attending a historically Black college or university. The overall benefit for this research is to increase awareness of students' views of study abroad at historically Black colleges and universities. Additionally, as a participant, you have an option to enter into a raffle for a \$100 Visa gift card. The odds of winning the gift card are 1:5000.

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. The survey should take approximately 8-10 minutes. Web-based surveys have minimum risks. You are free to withdraw at any time. You may discontinue this survey at any time without penalty. Deciding to participate or not will not affect your grades or class standing at your current institution or your relationship with Bowling Green State University.

To maintain confidentiality and anonymity, your responses to this survey will be stored on a password protected computer and the data will be accessible only the researcher. Data will be destroyed one year after the close of the survey. To further maintain confidentiality and anonymity please be aware of the following: (1) some universities may use tracking software so you may want to complete the survey on a personal computer; (2) do not leave survey open if using a public computer or a computer others may have access to;; and (3) clear your browser cache and page history after completing the survey.

If you have any questions regarding this study or survey please feel free to contact me, Nykia Gaines at 616-443-7282 or [gainesn@bgsu.edu](mailto:gainesn@bgsu.edu) or the chair of my dissertation committee, Dr. Dafina Lazarus Stewart at 491-372-6876 or [dafinas@bgsu.edu](mailto:dafinas@bgsu.edu). If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant, please contact the Chair of the Human Subjects Review Board at Bowling Green State University at 419-372-7716 or [hsrb@bgsu.edu](mailto:hsrb@bgsu.edu).

By completing and submitting your responses to the survey you are indicating that you are at least 18 years old, have read the above information, and consent to participation in the study. Again, thank you for your willingness to support my research interest and please know you are greatly appreciated.

**BGSU HSRB – APPROVED FOR USE**

ID# H11D204GX2

Effective: 04/21/2011

Expires: 03/31/2012

### APPENDIX C: Survey of Perceptions of Study Abroad

1. While at your CURRENT institution
- I have studied abroad
  - I have NOT studied abroad
2. While at my CURRENT institution, I have NOT studied abroad...
- But DO desire to study abroad
  - And DO NOT desire to study abroad
3. Which statement best describes your view of study abroad?
- Study abroad is not an option for me
  - Study abroad is not essential to me
  - Study abroad is a desirable part of the educational experience, but unrealistic in my major
  - Study abroad is a desirable and realistic part of the educational experience
4. How important do you think the following are to professionals practicing in your primary field of study?
- |  | Not Important            | Somewhat Important       | Very Important           |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Knowledge of a second language   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Awareness and understanding of cultural differences                                      | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Knowledge of international issues  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Knowledge of technical and professional practices in other countries                     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Ability to tolerate uncertainty  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Ability to work with people whose beliefs, values, and world views differ from one's own | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
5. Please, rate your understanding of study abroad as an opportunity at your current institution.
- Excellent
  - Very Good
  - Average
  - Minimal
6. Aside from general or liberal education requirements, are you allowed to use credit earned through study abroad toward requirements in your major?
- Yes
  - No
  - I do NOT know

7. Rate each statement.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Study abroad is important for personal development.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Study abroad enhances the ability to think critically and solve problems.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Study abroad helps find graduates better jobs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Study abroad enhances lifelong career opportunities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

8. Please rate your awareness of the following statements.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Study abroad options in my major.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Financial aid may be used for study abroad.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The availability of scholarships for study abroad.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

9. Have any of your advisors ever talked with you about study abroad?

- Yes  
 No

10. Have any of your advisors discussed academic planning for study abroad with you?

- Yes  
 No

11. Have any of your professors ever mentioned study abroad to you either,

- |                  | Yes                      | No                       |
|------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| During class     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Outside of class | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

7. How else have you received information about study abroad? (check all that apply)

- Study Abroad Office or Coordinator  
 Friends  
 Departmental college office, publication, website, or publicity.  
 New Student Orientation  
 Study abroad classroom presentation  
 Admissions Office or representatives  
 I have not received any information on study abroad from my institution  
 Other

13. Have you ever asked any of your ADVISORS about study abroad?

- Yes  
 No

14. Have you ever asked any of your PROFESSORS about study abroad?

- Yes  
 No

15. Please rate your awareness of the following statements.

	Not a Factor	Somewhat Important	Very Important	Most Important
How important are recommendations from other students (past or current participants) in considering study abroad?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How important are recommendations or support from professors or advisors in considering study abroad?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How important is cost in considering study abroad?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How important is delay in graduation in considering study abroad?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How important is time away from on-campus studies in considering study abroad?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How important is time away from family and friends in considering study abroad?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How important is concern about adapting to the language and culture of others in considering study abroad?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How important is concern about applying credits to degree requirements in considering study abroad?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How important is concern about health and safety abroad in considering study abroad?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

16. How important to you are the following factors in considering study abroad

	Not a Factor	Somewhat Important	Very Important	Most Important
How important is opposition from family/or friends in considering study abroad?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How important is fear of racism in considering study abroad?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How important is opposition from department and/or advisor in considering study abroad?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How important is competition with other educational opportunities in considering study abroad?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

How important is disruption of work/internship experiences in considering study abroad?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How important is concern about loss or current healthcare or housing in considering study abroad?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How important is family needs my support in considering study abroad?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17. How important to you are the following factors in considering study abroad				
	Yes		No	
I had significant interaction with international students at my institution.	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
I took more than one course on-campus with international content.	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
I studied another language.	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
I participated in international or intercultural activities on campus.	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
I traveled or visited another country.	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
I participated in a credit-bearing international internship or volunteer experience.	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
I worked abroad.	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
18. BEFORE attending my current institution, I...				
	Yes		No	
Studied abroad.	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
Lived abroad.	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
Was born/raised abroad.	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
Hosted or tutored an international student.	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
Traveled abroad.	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	

19. What has been your single longest period of international experience PRIOR to coming to college?
- None
  - Less than 4 weeks
  - 1-6 months
  - 7-12 months
  - More than 12 months
20. What has been your single longest period of international experience WHILE attending college?
- None
  - Less than 4 weeks
  - 1-6 months
  - 7-12 months
  - More than 12 months
21. Please select your current institution
- Kentucky State University
  - Wilberforce University
  - Xavier University of Louisiana
22. What is our race or ethnic background?
- African American or Black
  - Asian/Pacific Islander
  - Caucasian/White
  - Latino/a
  - Multiracial/Multiethnic
  - Native American
  - International Student
  - Other
23. What is your gender?
- Man
  - Woman
  - Transgender/Gender Non-Conforming
24. What is your current year in college?
- First-Year
  - Sophomore
  - Junior
  - Senior
  - Non-degree seeking
25. What is your primary area of study or major?
- Social Science (ex: sociology, political science)
  - Business and Management
  - Humanities
  - Fine or Applied Arts (ex: dance, communication)
  - Physical/Life Sciences
  - Foreign Languages
  - Health Sciences
  - Education
  - Engineering
  - Math or Computer Science
  - Agriculture
  - Undecided
- If not listed, please specify
- 
26. What is your cumulative GPA?
- A (3.75 – 4.0)
  - A-, B+ (3.25 – 3.74)
  - B (2.75 – 3.24)
  - B-, C+ (2.25 – 2.74)
  - C (1.75 – 2.24)
  - C- or less (below 1.75)

27. What is your mother's highest level of education?
- Did not complete high school
  - High school diploma or GED
  - Some college
  - 2-year degree
  - Bachelor's degree
  - Master's degree/Doctorate/Professional degree
  - Unknown
28. What is your father's highest level of education?
- Did not complete high school
  - High school diploma or GED
  - Some college
  - 2-year degree
  - Bachelor's degree
  - Master's degree/Doctorate/Professional degree
  - Unknown
29. How would you describe your hometown neighborhood?
- Urban
  - Suburban
  - Rural
30. Did you receive some form of financial aid? (i.e., scholarships, grants, or federal loans)
- Yes
  - No
  - Decline to answer



## APPENDIX D: Survey Cover Letter

### Participant Invitation

Hello,

My name is Nykia Gaines, a Ph.D. candidate at Bowling Green State University in the Higher Education Administration program. I am kindly seeking your support and time by participating in an 8-10 minute survey for my dissertation.

The purpose of my research is to explore student's perceptions towards study abroad while attending a historically Black college or university. The overall benefit for this research is to increase awareness of undergraduate student perceptions of study abroad at historically Black colleges and universities. Your participation is completely voluntary.

The risk of participation is no greater than that experienced in daily life. You have the right to withdraw from the study at any time by not completing the survey. Deciding to participate or not will not affect your grades or class standing at your current institution or your relationship with Bowling Green State University.

After completing the survey, you will have the opportunity to enter your name and e-mail address for a \$100 *Visa* gift card drawing. Your name and e-mail information will not be connected to your survey responses. Survey responses and data will be kept confidential and contact information will only be used to notify you regarding the gift card drawing.

If you have any questions regarding this study or survey please feel free to contact me, Nykia Gaines at 616-443-7282 or [gainesn@bgsu.edu](mailto:gainesn@bgsu.edu) or the chair of my dissertation committee, Dr. Dafina Lazarus Stewart at 419-372-6876 or [dafinas@bgsu.edu](mailto:dafinas@bgsu.edu). If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant, please contact the Chair of the Human Subjects Review Board at Bowling Green State University at 419-372-7716 or [hsrb@bgsu.edu](mailto:hsrb@bgsu.edu). Thank you again for your time and I appreciate your willingness to support my research.

**Please click on the link below to learn more about my research and to take the survey.**

***<http://survey.bgsu.edu/surveys/HESA/SASHBCU/studyabroad.htm>***

Thank you in advance for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Nykia D. Gaines  
Doctoral Student, Higher Education Administration  
Bowling Green State University  
[gainesn@bgsu.edu](mailto:gainesn@bgsu.edu) or 616.443.7282

BGSU HSRB – APPROVED FOR USE  
ID# H11D204GX2  
Effective: 04/08/2011  
Expires: 03/31/2012

## APPENDIX E: Survey Reminder Email

Hello,

My name is Nykia Gaines, a Ph.D. candidate at Bowling Green State University in the Higher Education Administration program. I am kindly seeking your support and time by participating in an 8-10 minute survey for my dissertation. **You may have received this email last week; however, due to technical difficulties, you are receiving this message again. If you have already completed this survey, I would like to thank you again for your participation and please disregard this message.**

The purpose of my research is to explore student's perceptions towards study abroad while attending a historically Black college or university. The overall benefit for this research is to increase awareness of undergraduate student perceptions of study abroad at historically Black colleges and universities. Your participation is completely voluntary.

The risk of participation is no greater than that experienced in daily life. You have the right to withdraw from the study at any time by not completing the survey. Deciding to participate or not will not affect your grades or class standing at your current institution or your relationship with Bowling Green State University.

After completing the survey, you will have the opportunity to enter your name and e-mail address for a \$100 *Visa* gift card drawing. Your name and e-mail information will not be connected to your survey responses. Survey responses and data will be kept confidential and contact information will only be used to notify you regarding the gift card drawing.

If you have any questions regarding this study or survey please feel free to contact me, Nykia Gaines at 616-443-7282 or [gainesn@bgsu.edu](mailto:gainesn@bgsu.edu) or the chair of my dissertation committee, Dr. Dafina Lazarus Stewart at 419-372-6876 or [dafinas@bgsu.edu](mailto:dafinas@bgsu.edu). If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant, please contact the Chair of the Human Subjects Review Board at Bowling Green State University at 419-372-7716 or [hsrb@bgsu.edu](mailto:hsrb@bgsu.edu). Thank you again for your time and I appreciate your willingness to support my research.

**Please click on the link below to learn more about my research and to take the survey.**

***<http://survey.bgsu.edu/surveys/HESA/SASHBCUKSU/studyabroad.htm>***

Thank you in advance for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Nykia D. Gaines  
Doctoral Student, Higher Education Administration  
Bowling Green State University  
[gainesn@bgsu.edu](mailto:gainesn@bgsu.edu) or 616.443.7282

## APPENDIX F: HSRB Approval Letter



Office of Research Compliance  
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Bowling Green, OH 43403-0183  
Phone: (419) 372-7718  
E-mail: hsrb@bgsu.edu

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April 8, 2011

**TO:** Nykia Gaines  
EDHD

**FROM:** Hillary Harms, Ph.D.  
HSRB Administrator

**RE:** HSRB Project No.: H11D204GX2

**TITLE:** *Perceptions of Study Abroad among African American Undergraduates at Historically Black Colleges and Universities*

You have met the conditions for approval for your project involving human subjects. **As of April 8, 2011, your project has been granted final approval by the Human Subjects Review Board (HSRB). This approval expires on March 31, 2012.** You may proceed with subject recruitment and data collection.

The final approved version of the consent document(s) is attached. Consistent with federal OHRP guidance to IRBs, **the consent document(s) bearing the HSRB approval/expiration date stamp is the only valid version and you must use copies of the date-stamped document(s) in obtaining consent from research subjects.**

You are responsible to conduct the study as approved by the HSRB and to use only approved forms. If you seek to make any changes in your project activities or procedures, send a request for modifications to the HSRB via this office. Those changes must be approved by the HSRB prior to their implementation.

**You have been approved to enroll 3000 participants.** If you want to enroll additional participants you must seek approval from the HSRB.

Good luck with your work. Let me know if this office or the HSRB can be of assistance as your project proceeds.

**Comments/ Modifications:**

Please add the text equivalent of the HSRB approval stamp to the 'footer' area of the consent document in the survey.

c: Dr. Dafina Stewart

Research Category: EXEMPT #2