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Short term, big impact? Changes in self-efficacy and cultural intelligence, and the adjustment of multicultural and monocultural students abroad

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ABSTRACT

Although most researchers agree that studying abroad is beneficial, it is uncertain whether studying abroad is related to positive outcomes for very short-term (e.g., 5-week) programs and for multicultural individuals (e.g., racial/ethnic minorities, immigrants). Using a mixed methods design, we examined changes in multicultural and monocultural students' self-efficacy and cultural intelligence, and their adjustment during a short-term study abroad program. Using longitudinal data from 79 participants, we found that general self-efficacy and cultural intelligence were higher after studying abroad than before studying abroad for monocultural individuals, but not for multicultural individuals. Interestingly, multicultural individuals had higher cultural intelligence than monocultural individuals at both time points. Overall, general self-efficacy and cultural intelligence before studying abroad were related to intercultural adjustment after studying abroad for all participants. In addition, interviews with 15 participants revealed that multicultural and monocultural individuals had different trajectories of intercultural competence while abroad. Implications for study-abroad program duration and content, and research on cultural intelligence are discussed.

More students are going abroad to study than ever before (Institute of International Education, 2016), with the majority of students participating in short-term programs (8 weeks or less) instead of more traditional semester-long or year-long programs. With these short-term programs gaining in popularity, students, faculty, and program administrators may want to know whether the benefits associated with traditional semester-long or year-long study abroad programs also apply to short-term programs. Using a mixed methods design, we examined changes in multicultural and monocultural students' self-efficacy and cultural intelligence, and their adjustment during a 5-week study abroad program.

Benefits of traditional and short-term study abroad

A recent literature review reveals that students benefit tremendously from their experiences studying abroad, especially in the areas of personal growth, intercultural competence, and academic performance (Stone & Petrick, 2013). More specifically, students report higher self-confidence, increased autonomy, greater sense of initiative, better communication skills, more cultural openness and sensitivity, and greater success obtaining a job and achieving professional goals (Marcotte, Desroches, & Pourpart, 2007), and

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they attribute this personal growth to learning another culture and learning outside the classroom (Ryan & Twibell, 2000). Indeed, students have greater flexibility (e.g., higher tolerance for ambiguity) and better critical thinking skills (e.g., thinking outside of one's own cultural framework) after studying abroad compared to before studying abroad (Savicki, Downing-Burnette, Heller, Binder, & Suntinger, 2004). Further, those who studied abroad are more concerned about international politics, more interested in cross-cultural issues, more culturally cosmopolitan (Carlson & Widaman, 1998), less prejudicial, and less ethnocentric (Goldstein & Kim, 2006) compared to those who did not study abroad (Carlson & Widaman, 1998).

Despite the dearth of research on short-term study abroad programs, existing research suggests that the benefits associated with traditional study abroad programs may generalize to short-term programs, such that those in short-term study abroad programs also experience significant gains in personal awareness, intercultural competence, and academic progress (Anderson, Lawton, Rexeisen, & Hubbard, 2006; Chieffo & Griffiths, 2004; Lumkes, Hallett, & Vallade, 2012; Mapp, 2012; Poole & Davis, 2006). Personal awareness includes growth in areas such as self-confidence, motivation, and personal identity (which may include global vs. national citizenship; Bell & Anscombe, 2013; Chieffo & Griffiths, 2004; Poole & Davis, 2006), and a change in views about racial privilege (Lumkes et al., 2012). However, the most widely reported benefit of studying abroad is increased intercultural competence (Anderson et al., 2006; Chieffo & Griffiths, 2004; Lumkes et al., 2012; Mapp, 2012). In addition, positive academic correlates of studying abroad include greater knowledge of the culture and history of students' host country, and a stronger commitment to their academic and career field (Bell & Anscombe, 2013; Mapp, 2012; Poole & Davis, 2006).

Conversely, some studies found that the benefits associated with studying abroad are attenuated for short-term programs. For example, those who studied abroad for at least six months had greater intercultural competence than those who studied abroad for less than six months (Behrnd & Porzelt, 2012). Further, those who studied abroad for a semester had greater intercultural sensitivity, higher global mindedness, and a deeper understanding of the host culture and international issues than those who studied abroad for eight weeks or less (Kehl & Morris, 2007-2008; Medina-Lopez-Portillo, 2004). Nevertheless, the potential benefits of very short study-abroad programs (1–5 weeks) are still uncertain (Dwyer, 2004).

Intercultural adjustment, self-efficacy, and cultural intelligence

For our study, we focused on the intercultural adjustment, general self-efficacy, and cultural intelligence of multicultural and monocultural students in a 5-week study-abroad program. Intercultural adjustment, also known as international or cross-cultural adjustment, concerns the degree to which individuals are comfortable with and proficient in the behaviors and values of a new culture (Black & Mendenhall, 1990; Searle & Ward, 1990). It consists of three facets: work adjustment, interaction adjustment, and general adjustment (Black, Mendenhall, & Oddou, 1991). Expatriates, including study-abroad students, are considered well-adjusted if they can adapt to the new work environment, locals or natives in the host country, and the new culture and its living conditions. Individual factors (e.g., self-efficacy, personality, cultural flexibility; Black et al., 1991; Shaffer, Harrison, Gregersen, Black, & Ferzandi, 2006; Ward, Leong, & Low, 2004), along with organizational, job, and non-work factors, are predictive of better intercultural adjustment. The individual factors that we examined are general self-efficacy and cultural intelligence.

General self-efficacy is the belief in one's own agency and competence (Scholz, Doña, Sud, & Schwarzer, 2002), and it is predictive of greater intercultural adjustment among international students (Hechanova-Alampay, Beehr, Christiansen, & van Horn, 2002). Higher self-efficacy allows students to perform newly learned behaviors in foreign situations, and consequently receive feedback on those behaviors. In turn, this feedback reduces students' uncertainty of expectations, allowing them to perform culturally appropriate behaviors, which then leads to greater intercultural adjustment (Black et al., 1991). Outside of the study abroad context, individuals with higher general self-efficacy tend to have better self-regulation, better well-being, better health behaviors, and better coping strategies (Luszczynska, Scholz, & Schwarzer, 2005). One reason why students who study abroad receive more job offers (Maddux, Bivolaru, Hafenbrack, Tadmor, & Galinsky, 2014) may be because studying abroad is associated with greater empathy, patience, self-confidence, and other positive personal characteristics, including self-efficacy (Milstein, 2005; Willard-Holt, 2001).

Cultural intelligence includes the knowledge, skills, and awareness to transcend cultural differences and function effectively in culturally diverse settings (Earley & Ang, 2003; Thomas et al., 2008), and it can be referred to more broadly as intercultural or cross-cultural competence (Chiu, Lonner, Matsumoto, & Ward, 2013; Leung, Ang, & Tan, 2014). Like general self-efficacy, cultural intelligence has been found to predict greater intercultural adjustment (Ang et al., 2007; Leung et al., 2014; Mol, Born, Willemsen, & van der Molen, 2005). Relatedly, it is also associated with a more successful study abroad experience (Barbuto, Beenen, & Tran, 2015), including increased efforts to seek out cultural experiences while abroad, and greater interest in going abroad for future work or school (Racicot & Ferry, 2016). More importantly, an increase in this intercultural competence is a desired outcome of international experience, namely study abroad (Anderson et al., 2006; Carlson & Widaman, 1998; Jackson, 2008).

In summary, desired benefits of study abroad include the development of positive personal characteristics, such as general self-efficacy, and development in terms of cross-cultural issues, such as cultural intelligence. Indeed, study abroad is associated with increased general self-efficacy [Milstein, 2005; Willard-Holt, 2001; or more generally, greater personal growth (Marcotte et al., 2007; Poole & Davis, 2006; Ryan & Twibell, 2000)] and cultural intelligence [or related constructs under the umbrella of intercultural competence (Anderson et al., 2006; Carlson & Widaman, 1998; Jackson, 2008; Marcotte et al., 2007)]. In turn, these two variables have been found to improve the study abroad experience in the form of greater intercultural adjustment (Ang et al., 2007; Hechanova-Alampay et al., 2002; Mol et al., 2005). Therefore, in our study, we focused on both variations in general self-efficacy and cultural intelligence during the study abroad experience, and general self-efficacy and cultural intelligence as predictors of intercultural adjustment.

Demographic composition of U.S. Study abroad samples

The goal of our study was to examine the self-efficacy, cultural intelligence, and adjustment of both multicultural and monocultural students abroad. Multicultural individuals are those who identify with more than one culture (Nguyen & Benet-Martínez, 2007): for example, someone who has been exposed to, has internalized, and now identifies with both Mexican and American cultures. "Multicultural" may be used to describe immigrants, refugees, indigenous people, racial/ethnic minorities, multiracial individuals, those in interracial relationships, and third-culture kids (Padilla, 2006). It is important to note that culture and race are distinct (psychological construct vs. social categorization based on phenotypic characteristics; Markus, 2008; Phinney, 1996), and that not all White Americans are monocultural and not all non-White Americans are multicultural. However, in the US, "American" is implicitly associated with Whiteness (Devos & Banaji, 2005). Consequently, non-White Americans are seen as the "other", such as having another culture, whether they do or not. For example, Asian Americans, even those whose family has resided in the US for generations, are often perceived to be and subsequently treated as perpetual foreigners in the US (Huynh, Devos, & Smalarz, 2011). Therefore, in the context of the US, non-White Americans are multicultural due to their visible, racial/ethnic minority status.

Unfortunately, there are no statistics on the percentage of multicultural vs. monocultural American students studying abroad; therefore, it is necessary to estimate these numbers using race as a proxy (faulty as it may be) for culture. In the US, non-White (presumably multicultural) students are not participating in study abroad programs to the same degree as White (presumably monocultural) students [non-White students comprise 27% of the study-abroad student population (Institute of International Education, 2016) vs. 42% of the general undergraduate student population (Musu-Gillette et al., 2016)]. However, there are more non-White students studying abroad now than ever, and it is important to understand the experiences of these students.

The experiences of these multicultural individuals abroad may be different from those of their monocultural counterparts, who have internalized only the national (i.e., mainstream American) culture. For example, multicultural individuals are more aware of different cultures and multiple perspectives, so the experience of culture shock (Oberg, 1960) may not be as extreme for them as for their monocultural peers (Selmer & Lam, 2004; Sussman, 2000). Moreover, they already have experience learning at least two cultures, so they may be more skilled at learning yet another culture compared to monocultural individuals (Bell & Harrison, 1996). Relatedly, multicultural individuals have the experience and skills for negotiating and navigating two or more cultures, such as enacting the appropriate behaviors for a given cultural situation (LaFromboise, Coleman, & Gerton, 1993; Selmer & Lam, 2004), so they may perform better abroad than monocultural individuals. In other words, their multicultural competence (e.g., cultural frame-switching, cultural metacognition) may allow them to be effective in intercultural situations (Hong, 2010; Thomas, Brannen, & Garcia, 2010). Finally, some multicultural individuals have experienced life as a minority member in their home country, so the stress of being a cultural outsider abroad may be less stressful for them than for their monocultural counterparts (Bell & Harrison, 1996; Volpone, Marquardt, Casper, & Avery, 2018). Therefore, a goal of this study was to compare multicultural and monocultural individuals' study abroad experience via exploratory quantitative analyses and qualitative analyses of interviews.

Studying "abroad" in U.S. territories

The short-term study abroad program under investigation in this paper is unique because it took place in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, two unincorporated territories of the U.S., which do not administratively constitute separate countries but are considered to be Caribbean nations with their own national and cultural identities. The first 4 weeks of the program were spent in Puerto Rico, which is 99% Latinx, and where the official languages are both English and Spanish (Central Intelligence Agency, 2013) but where Spanish is mostly spoken. Then, the last week was spent on the Virgin Islands, which is 76% Black, and Spanish Creole and French Creole are spoken in addition to English (Central Intelligence Agency, 2013). Therefore, although not international, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands are culturally different from mainland U.S., and studying there could be considered an "abroad" (or intercultural) experience for mainland U.S. students. However, because the current program involves studying in U.S. territories, it shares similarities with study away programs, where students study domestically but off-campus (Engberg, 2013). Despite being in-country, study away programs have been found to be associated with greater global perspective-taking and higher multicultural competence because such programs challenge students and expose them to new and different cultures and contexts (Engberg, 2013; Mitchell & Westbrook, 2016). Therefore, by examining the intercultural adjustment, general self-efficacy, and cultural intelligence of both multicultural and monocultural students in a short-term study "away-yet-abroad" program, we fill multiple gaps in the literature.

Hypotheses

Our first set of hypotheses concern changes that occur during the study abroad experience. More specifically, we expected general self-efficacy to be higher after studying abroad than before studying abroad (Hypothesis 1). We also expected cultural intelligence to be higher after studying abroad than before studying abroad (Hypothesis 2).

Our second set of hypotheses concern the ability of general self-efficacy and cultural intelligence to predict intercultural adjustment. More specifically, we expected general self-efficacy to be associated with greater intercultural adjustment (Hypothesis 3). We also expected cultural intelligence to be associated with greater intercultural adjustment (Hypothesis 4).

Finally, because our sample is more diverse than the typical study abroad sample, we conducted exploratory analyses comparing multicultural individuals to monocultural individuals on levels of general self-efficacy and cultural intelligence, changes in general self-efficacy and cultural intelligence, and the associations between general self-efficacy and cultural intelligence with intercultural

adjustment. To supplement these exploratory quantitative analyses, our qualitative analyses are focused on differences in the study abroad experience for multicultural vs. monocultural individuals.

Method

Participants

Participants (N = 79) were mainland U.S. American undergraduate students who studied in a 5-week program in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands (Saint Croix, Saint John, and Saint Thomas) in the summer of 2012 (N = 11), 2013 (N = 25), 2014 (N = 21), or 2015 (N = 22). Most participants were female (68.35%) and U.S.-born (60.76%). The racial/ethnic breakdown of the sample is 25.32% Latinx (e.g., Mexican, Salvadorian, Dominican), 22.78% Asian American (e.g., Chinese, Korean), 20.25% Black (e.g., African American, Cape Verdean, Jamaican, Haitian), 18.99% White/European American (e.g., Irish, Italian), 3.80% Middle Eastern (e.g., Lebanese, Persian), and 7.59% multiracial. Most students came from "middle-class" families (51.90%), with some from "lower" or "lower-middle" class families (32.91%), and few from "upper" or "upper-middle" class families (11.39%).

The study "away-yet-abroad" program (the Caribbean Studies Summer Institute), developed by the University of Massachusetts in Boston in collaboration with the University of Puerto Rico in Cayey, consists of three courses that may be taken for credit: an anthropology course on "Peoples and Cultures of the Caribbean", a sociology course on "Race and Ethnic Relations", and an independent study course. It is an itinerant program that combines class lectures, local guest lecturers, and field trips in seven cities throughout Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. Depending on the city, students stayed in hotels or university dorms. Students were able to interact with locals in different settings: by talking to local guest lecturers, by interacting with students from the University of Puerto Rico in Cayey, and during their free time because hotels were located within walking distance to urban centers.

Research design

For this mixed methods study, we employed an explanatory strategy (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011), whereby qualitative data and analyses were used to better understand and interpret quantitative findings, specifically the results of our exploratory quantitative analyses. In this design, we collected our qualitative and quantitative data concurrently. We chose this explanatory approach because quantitative research comparing multicultural vs. monocultural individual's study abroad experience, particularly the development of their intercultural competence, is limited; therefore, qualitative data and analyses are needed to illuminate these phenomena for multicultural individuals.

Quantitative method

Measures

Self-efficacy. The General Perceived Self-Efficacy Scale (GPSES; Scholz et al., 2002) was used to measure participants' level of self-efficacy. Participants completed this 10-item measure using a 4-point rating scale (1 = *not at all true*, 4 = *exactly true*). Sample items include "I am certain that I can accomplish my goals" and "I can handle whatever comes my way". For the GPSES, higher scores indicated greater self-efficacy. In this sample, GPSES scores had good internal-consistency reliability at Time 1 (α = .85) and excellent internal-consistency reliability at Time 2 (α = .90).

Cultural intelligence. Participants completed the 20-item Cultural Intelligence Scale (CQS; Ang et al., 2007) using a 7-point rating scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*). Sample items include "I enjoy interacting with people from different cultures" and "I am conscious of the cultural knowledge I apply to cross-cultural interactions". For the CQS, higher scores indicated higher CQ. In this sample, CQS scores had good internal-consistency reliability at Time 1 (α = .87) and excellent internal-consistency reliability at Time 2 (α = .93).

Adjustment. To assess intercultural adjustment, we used the Expatriate Adjustment Scale (EAS; Black & Stephens, 1989). To make it appropriate for study-abroad students, we did not use one item ("supervisory responsibilities") and adapted three items to make them more relevant to students and the study-abroad experience. Specifically, we changed "interacting with host nationals outside of work" to "interacting with host nationals outside of school", "specific job responsibilities" to "specific responsibilities as a student", "performance standards and expectations" to "academic performance standards and expectations". These are typical modifications when using the EAS with student samples (e.g., Gong, 2003; Hechanova-Alampay et al., 2002; Tsang, 2001; Zhou & Santos, 2007). Participants completed this 13-item measure using a 7-point rating scale (1 = *very unadjusted*, 7 = *very adjusted*). For the EAS, higher scores indicated better intercultural adjustment. In this sample, EAS scores had excellent internal-consistency reliability at Time 2 (α = .94).

Multiculturalism. Participants responded to several questions regarding their cultural identity. First, they rated their identification with U.S. American culture. Then, they listed the other culture(s) to which they identified. Finally, they rated their identification with each of those cultures. Participants completed these ratings using a 5-point scale (1 = *very weak*, 5 = *very strong*). We categorized participants who identified above the midpoint with more than one culture (e.g., Guatemalan and American) as "multicultural" (n = 26), and those who did not as "monocultural" (n = 48). Consequently, it may include White/European Americans in the

multicultural category and racial/ethnic minorities in the monocultural category.

Procedure. Participants completed the above measures at two time points: Time 1 or week 1 of the study-abroad program and Time 2 or week 5 of the program. At Time 1, participants also responded to questions about their gender, country of birth, race/ethnicity, and socioeconomic status. It took 5–10 minutes to complete the survey packet at each time point. Participation was voluntary, and students did not receive any compensation for their participation. Participants' identities were kept anonymous, and their responses were kept confidential.

Data analysis. To test Hypotheses 1 and 2 regarding changes in general self-efficacy and cultural intelligence, respectively, we conducted repeated-measures *t* tests. Our hypotheses would be supported if there were significant changes in these two variables (specifically, higher means at Time 2 compared to Time 1). To test Hypotheses 3 and 4, we conducted Pearson product-moment correlations. Our hypotheses would be supported if there were significant positive associations between general self-efficacy and intercultural adjustment, and between cultural intelligence and intercultural adjustment. For our exploratory analyses, we conducted the above analyses separately for multicultural and monocultural individuals. In addition, we conducted independent-samples *t* tests to determine differences between these two groups on levels of general self-efficacy and cultural intelligence, and hierarchical regression analyses to determine the moderating effect of multiculturalism on the relationship between general self-efficacy and intercultural adjustment, and the relationship between cultural intelligence and intercultural adjustment.

Qualitative method

Interviewer characteristics. To better understand multicultural and monocultural individuals' study abroad experience and to the supplement the exploratory quantitative analyses, the second author conducted in-depth semi-structured interviews during the last week of the study-abroad program. He (the interviewer) is an English-Spanish bilingual and a White Latino from Argentina, who had lived in the U.S. for more than 15 years. Because he was a faculty member and activities coordinator for the program, participants were familiar and comfortable with him.

Participant selection. Purposive sampling (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009) was used to select 15 students from the first three years of the larger 2012–2015 sample to represent a variety of racial and ethnic backgrounds: 5 White/European American, 4 Latinx, 4 Black, 1 Asian American, and 1 multiracial participants. For these qualitative analyses, we did not have quantitative measures of cultural identity with which to categorize participants; therefore, we had to resort to using race, nativity, generation status, and language to create our "monocultural" group. In other words, monolingual English-speaking, monoracial White students born in the US, with parents also born in the US (i.e., participants not from an immigrant or refugee family) were considered monocultural ($n = 5$). The remaining participants, who were racial/ethnic minorities in the US, were considered multicultural based on the racial history and context of the US (as discussed earlier).

These participants were interviewed for 30 to 50 min. Additionally, six of them participated in follow-up interviews one month after their return from studying abroad in order to clarify points and themes that remained unclear to the interviewer.

Interview questions. The goals of these interviews were to describe trajectories for the personal growth and intercultural competence of multicultural vs. monocultural participants, and to understand factors differentially predicting these trajectories. To that end, students were first asked general questions about the study abroad experience: What surprised you the most about the study abroad experience? What experience do you remember most vividly? These broad questions allowed participants to spontaneously discuss issues related to personal growth and intercultural competence without being prompted by the interviewer. Although there were predetermined questions, the semi-structured interviews were flexible and dynamic: If participants alluded to personal growth or intercultural competence, the interviewer asked follow-up questions on these matters. Subscribing to the funneling technique (Smith et al., 2009), students were then asked more specific questions about potential changes to their national, cultural, racial, and ethnic identities while abroad. These interviews provided rich descriptive accounts of participants' impressions under naturalistic settings, addressing some of the limits of purely quantitative research.

Interpretive phenomenological analysis. We recorded, transcribed, and analyzed the aforementioned interviews using interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA; Smith et al., 2009). IPA is a phenomenological, hermeneutic, and idiographic approach to qualitative research, such that it emphasizes how the participant him/herself makes sense of his/her lived experiences. We chose to use IPA because it is ideal for novel and ambiguous topics, such as the study abroad experience of multicultural vs. monocultural individuals.

To conduct IPA, we transcribed the interviews and read the transcription multiple times. We then systematically searched for themes that emerged from these transcripts, and looked for connections among themes and patterns (similarities and differences) across participants. More specifically, we used values coding (Saldaña, 2009) for the first cycle of data coding because our qualitative data concerned student's values, beliefs, and worldviews. Codes emerged on students' reactions to experiences of discomfort, cultural misunderstandings, and conflict. In the second cycle, we used pattern coding (Saldaña, 2009) to group summaries into a smaller number of themes, describing in-depth the ways in which the worldviews of racial majority vs. minority students and of multilingual vs. monolinguals students influenced how they made sense of their intercultural experiences. After preliminary data analysis, the interviewer met with six participants to ask follow-up questions about issues that needed clarification and to determine the validity (credibility) of the analysis.

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics for General Self-Efficacy and Cultural Intelligence by Time and Multiculturalism.

	Time 1		Time 2	
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
General Self-Efficacy (1–4 scale)				
Total Sample	3.13	0.45	3.26	0.45
Multiculturals Only	3.21	0.43	3.27	0.46
Monoculturals Only	3.12	0.45	3.28	0.41
Cultural Intelligence (1–7 scale)				
Total Sample	4.59	0.71	4.73	0.85
Multiculturals Only	4.90	0.70	5.12	0.89
Monoculturals Only	4.50	0.75	4.66	0.83

Results

Quantitative findings

Hypothesis testing

Our first hypothesis is that general self-efficacy would be higher after studying abroad than before studying abroad. To test this hypothesis, we conducted a repeated-measures *t* test and found that general self-efficacy scores at Time 2 were significantly higher than at Time 1, $t(66) = 2.48$, $p = .016$, $r = .29$ (moderate effect). Descriptive statistics by time points are presented in Table 1. Therefore, supporting Hypothesis 1, participants had general self-efficacy after studying abroad than before studying abroad.

Our second hypothesis is that cultural intelligence would be higher after studying abroad than before studying abroad. To test this hypothesis, we conducted a repeated-measures *t* test and found that cultural intelligence scores at Time 2 were marginally significantly higher than at Time 1 (see Table 1), $t(69) = 1.81$, $p = .07$, $r = .21$ (small-to-moderate effect). Therefore, partially supporting Hypothesis 2, participants had marginally higher cultural intelligence after studying abroad than before studying abroad.

To determine whether general self-efficacy and cultural intelligence are associated with intercultural adjustment (Hypotheses 3 and 4), we conducted Pearson product-moment correlations. As hypothesized, general self-efficacy at Time 1 was significantly, positively, and moderately correlated with intercultural adjustment at Time 2, $r(61) = .40$, $p = .001$. Also as hypothesized, cultural intelligence at Time 1 was significantly, positively, and moderately correlated with intercultural adjustment at Time 2, $r(62) = .29$, $p = .02$. In other words, supporting Hypotheses 3 and 4, participants' general self-efficacy and cultural intelligence from Time 1 were related to intercultural adjustment at Time 2.

Exploratory analyses

We conducted exploratory analyses to compare the study abroad experiences of multicultural vs. monocultural students. These analyses revealed that multicultural individuals and monocultural individuals did not have significantly different levels of general self-efficacy at Time 1 [$t(64) = 0.80$, $p = .42$, $r = .10$] or Time 2 [$t(56) = 0.05$, $p = .96$, $r = .01$; see Table 1]. Although multicultural individuals' general self-efficacy did not differ across time [$t(21) = 0.14$, $p = .89$, $r = .03$], the general self-efficacy of monocultural individuals was significantly lower at Time 1 than at Time 2 [$t(34) = 2.68$, $p = .01$, $r = .42$]. Therefore, general self-efficacy was higher after studying abroad than before studying abroad for monocultural individuals, but not for multicultural individuals.

Not surprisingly, multicultural individuals had significantly higher cultural intelligence at Time 1 compared to monocultural individuals, $t(64) = 2.19$, $p = .03$, $r = .26$ (see Table 1). They also had significantly higher cultural intelligence at Time 2 compared to monocultural individuals [$t(58) = 2.07$, $p = .04$, $r = .26$], but this difference in Time 2 cultural intelligence is due to differences in Time 1 cultural intelligence [($\beta = .64$, $t(56) = 5.98$, $p = 1.64 \times 10^{-7}$] rather than differences in multiculturalism [($\beta = .03$, $t(56) = 0.30$, $p = .77$], $R^2 = .42$, $F(2, 56) = 20.50$, $p = 2.09 \times 10^{-7}$. Moreover, it appears that the change in cultural intelligence before vs. after studying abroad is more pronounced (though only marginally significant) for monocultural individuals [$t(35) = 1.93$, $p = .06$, $r = .31$] than for multicultural individuals [$t(22) = 0.88$, $p = .39$, $r = .19$) although this difference between monocultural and multicultural individuals is not significant, $z = 0.45$, $p = .65$. In other words, monocultural individuals, but not multicultural individuals, experience higher cultural intelligence after studying abroad than before studying abroad. In addition, multicultural individuals' higher cultural intelligence (compared to monocultural individuals) at the beginning the study abroad experience translates to higher cultural intelligence (compared to monocultural individuals) at the end of the study abroad program.

Overall, multiculturalism did not moderate the relationship between general self-efficacy at Time 1 and intercultural adjustment at Time 2 [$\beta = .10$, $t(50) = 0.62$, $p = .54$] or the relationship between cultural intelligence at Time 1 and intercultural adjustment at Time 2 [$\beta = -.14$, $t(50) = -0.73$, $p = .47$]. In other words, the direction and magnitude of association between intercultural adjustment and its predictors (namely general self-efficacy and cultural intelligence) are similar for multicultural and monocultural individuals.

Qualitative findings

The above exploratory quantitative analysis provided a cursory understanding of multicultural vs. monocultural individuals' study abroad experience; therefore, we pursued qualitative inquiry to further investigate the developmental trajectory of personal growth and intercultural competence for these participants. Using IPA, we observed that all students had experiences that changed their perspectives on culture and identity, but the process of and factors influencing this change differed across participants. Notably, similarities and differences emerged based on students' race, ethnicity, and language proficiency, and these background variables shaped their experiences, their communication with locals, and subsequently, their personal and cross-cultural development. In other words, we discovered four themes, which were tied to participants' ethnoracial and linguistic backgrounds.

Racial majority but linguistic minority abroad

The first theme concerns the study abroad experiences of racial majority members (e.g., White individuals in Puerto Rico) who did not speak Spanish. These participants experienced an "otherness" not due to the color of their skin, but to their lack of Spanish proficiency and subsequent communication barriers. This marginalization that they experienced firsthand seemed to help them to develop personally and interculturally.

From the beginning of the interview, Axel, a White, monolingual English-speaker from the Boston metropolitan area, acknowledged that his skin color and language proficiency shaped the experiences he had on the trip, and his lack of Spanish made him feel isolated: "I can't understand everybody, and it just makes me feel distinctly separated from where we're at". Unlike the Spanish-speakers on the trip, he did not report talking to locals during the time spent in the Spanish-speaking Caribbean, but rather relied on translations from his Spanish-speaking peers. For example, during an incident in Puerto Rico where there was a conflict between locals and the police, Axel depended on two Spanish-speaking students to translate for him. This experience of being a language minority temporarily shifted power dynamics between Axel and his Spanish-speaking peers, and such shifts afforded students like Axel the opportunity to empathize with immigrants in the U.S.

Linguistic majority but racial minority abroad

The second theme concerns the study abroad experiences of racial minority members (i.e., Black individuals in Puerto Rico, White individuals in the Virgin Islands) who spoke the dominant language (i.e., Spanish in Puerto Rico, English in the Virgin Islands). These participants experienced an "otherness" due to the color of their skin, rather than their poor language proficiency. Similar to the first theme, being marginalized was a catalyst for personal growth and intercultural competence development.

Bruno (a Black, bilingual English-Spanish speaker who grew up in Boston with parents from the Dominican Republic) and Shawn (a White, monolingual English-speaker from the Boston area) spent a lot of time together during the program, and they recounted many experiences that showed how race and language impacted their experiences abroad. In Puerto Rico, Bruno talked to a local in Spanish while translating for Shawn, but at the end of the exchange, the local shook Shawn's hand and refused to shake Bruno's hand. Shawn interpreted this incident as being due to the fact that Bruno is Black. When they were in the Virgin Islands, however, the opposite happened: At the end of a conversation with a local, he only wanted to shake Bruno's hand and not Shawn's hand. This experience of rejection and marginalization was very jolting for White monocultural students.

> "F*ck. I look like a f*cking White gringo here. I hat[e] all that sh*t. … I felt depressed. I felt like the victim. … It's hard to get pass that. But it reminded me of … 'Wow, this is what it this feels to be Black in the United States.'" (Shawn)
>
> "… Even being here it's … a much different feeling cuz you feel much more aware of being White, being blonde, and … you can't … just be. You can't be invisible. … It's much more present, and it … put[s] yourself in someone else's shoes, and that's how a lot of times, minorities must feel in the United States in … very, very White areas." (Suzie, a White, monolingual English-speaker)

For many of the White students, this study abroad experience provided an opportunity to observe how peers of color were discriminated against, or how they themselves were discriminated against. Their personal and cultural development required, though, an inference and a willingness to understand the lived experiences of minorities in the U.S.

In the Virgin Islands, race, not language, posed a barrier for Axel. He experienced blatant discrimination at a supermarket: The cashier acted impolitely and told him there was no ice even though he could clearly see that there was ice for sale. Axel attributed this incident to the fact that he is White and thus looked like a tourist on the island. Although he felt that he was being treated differently because of the color of his skin, he did not feel comfortable addressing this with the cashier or with anyone in the supermarket.

> "… it reminds me of … what it must be being … a person of color in the United States. They get their daily reminder. It's depressing; it's depressing to look at that, and it reminds me of … the White person: … They don't [get] persecuted at stores. They don't get … people think[ing] that they steal."

This is not an uncommon experience for White students in the program: Most White students interviewed developed intercultural competence through the stories told by other students, requiring them to see other perspectives, and make inferences about how being repeatedly treated like an outsider would feel. This process helped them to build empathy about how a person of color might feel in the U.S.

Not my first experience with discrimination

The third theme concerns the study abroad experiences of individuals with minority statuses in mainland U.S. These participants had felt marginalized at home, before studying abroad. Because they had experience dealing with the stress of being an outsider, they

did not have to adjust to that aspect of studying abroad, and they already had resources to cope with further alienation and isolation (Bell & Harrison, 1996; Volpone et al., 2018). For these students (e.g., students of color, multicultural students), the process of developing intercultural competence was different from those of White monocultural students.

> "I kind of feel like [for] my whole life, I've been reflecting on this… It doesn't bother me because I always felt like an 'other.'" (Eunice, a Korean American born in the U.S.)

Bruno (Black, Spanish-speaker) talked about the hand-shaking event, but only as a side comment because he had many experiences of being discriminated against back home in Boston, so the discrimination in Puerto Rico was not a surprise or novel to him.

> "It feels fine to me. It's different. It's definitely a little different, but I really couldn't tell the difference. I felt comfortable in PR [Puerto Rico], but I felt like when people–when certain people, not all–would know I was Dominican (like when I asked for a Presidente [a Dominican beer] at a bar instead of a Medalla [a Puerto Rican beer]), I'd get a little snide 'a little f*cking Dominican!' [laughs]"

However, Bruno believed that the discrimination he experienced in Puerto Rico was due to different reasons: a mix of his skin color, his Dominican accent in Spanish, and in the above scenario, also his beverage choice. Motivated to understand this type of discrimination, he interviewed a taxi driver, a Dominican, about the pattern of migration and experiences of Dominicans in Puerto Rico. Because of his multicultural background, Bruno was able to move beyond White monocultural students' shock of being discriminated against to investigate how race and ethnicity play out in the Caribbean, and to develop greater cross-cultural understanding. Furthermore, through their friendship, Bruno enabled Shawn to also partake in the development of intercultural competence and to understand race relations in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Thus, race and language ability determined the kind of interactions that students had with locals and with each other, and subsequently, the process of personal and cultural development that they underwent.

Knowing that there is more than one way of being

The fourth theme concerns the study abroad experiences of individuals who had internalized more than one culture. These multicultural participants had already acquired the behavioral, cognitive, and metacognitive skills of learning, navigating, and negotiating cultures before going abroad (Hong, 2010; Thomas et al., 2010). In other words, the starting point in their development of intercultural competence was different from the starting point for White monocultural students, putting them on a different path and trajectory.

Denny, a multilingual (English, Spanish, Cape-Verdean Creole) Black-identified native of Cape Verde, was able to comfortably interact with locals (people on the streets, taxi drivers, store owners, etc.) both in Puerto Rico and in the Virgin Islands. Her multicultural background gave her the insight and confidence to explore the nuances of race, skin color, and nationality in Puerto Rico. In the Virgin Islands, she had the competence (awareness and sensitivity) to explore cultural differences, and the motivation to understand cultural traditions that were foreign to her. For instance, Denny talked to a native islander woman who was in the process of applying make-up for her 8-year-old daughter, so that they could attend the night-long carnival. From her Black Cape-Verdean American perspective, Denny initially thought that it was highly inappropriate for a mother to take her young daughter to an all-night party. However, the exchange with this local woman prompted Denny to seek out information and learn about the cultural practices surrounding childrearing in the Caribbean. In other words, she was able to develop intercultural competence in a different, more complex and profound way than did the White monocultural students.

Janet, a bilingual (English-Spanish), fair-skinned Latina born in Boston with ancestors from Guatemala, was able to make astute observations about ethnic identity in Puerto Rico. Out of curiosity and informed by her own personal experiences, she asked many locals: "What do you identify as?" Surprisingly, only one local (a taxi driver) spoke at length about the African roots in his family and about the Native American influence in Puerto Rico. The other locals she talked to only mentioned their European heritage. Inspired by these conversations, she conducted a small pilot study to explore the construction of race and ethnicity in the Caribbean. Janet was able to do this in part due to her multicultural background, or more specifically, her language abilities and her experiences thinking about and exploring her own ethnic identity.

Even, Eunice, who is neither Black nor a fluent Spanish speaker, was able to delve deeper into the cultural complexities of Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands, perhaps because her experience with negotiating her own two cultures (Korean and American) allowed her to be open to additional cultures.

> "I feel like every day, every experience is showing me something new about race (and [the] perception of race) or identity or language. … Wherever I go, I'll see differences, and I also see similarities… It's been really enriching for me to have all these other different points of view and always having to sort of see where those meet and where those don't meet, and see in [what] ways we are different, in [what] ways we are similar."

It is this awareness of different cultures and multiple perspectives that enabled Eunice to think critically about gender dynamics, and cultural differences in gender norms and relations in the U.S. vs. the Caribbean. She recognized the Caribbean norm of cat-calling women: "bedtime stories that kids get told and the sort of messages that are… told [about how] women are … expected to have to put up with harassment." She compared that to gender inequality and sexual harassment in the U.S., and she evaluated those incidences ("it shouldn't be happening and it frustrates me"), but she hesitated to make an ethnocentric judgment without further cultural understanding ("I can compare them [harassment in the U.S. vs. the Caribbean] but then, I'm not gonna say that it's the same thing"). In summary, these interviews showed that though all students are challenged, and thus experience personal growth (e.g., increased

empathy), there are marked differences among students' trajectories in developing intercultural competence, and these differences are clearly tied to race, ethnicity, language proficiency, and previous experiences juggling multiple cultures (i.e., multiculturalism).

Discussion

Summary of findings

Our quantitative and qualitative findings suggest that the benefits associated with traditional study abroad programs may also be associated with short-term study "away-yet-abroad" programs. Specifically, mainland U.S. American students had higher general self-efficacy and cultural intelligence at the end of 5 weeks studying in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands as compared to when they first arrived there. This is congruent with previous research indicating that those who studied abroad demonstrate increases in personal growth and awareness (e.g., Milstein, 2005; Willard-Holt, 2001) as well as intercultural competence, including cultural intelligence, sensitivity, and awareness (e.g., Anderson et al., 2006; Carlson & Widaman, 1998; Jackson, 2008). Supporting previous research (Ang et al., 2007; Hechanova-Alampay et al., 2002; Mol et al., 2005), we also identified general self-efficacy and cultural intelligence as important personal characteristics to have because they were individual factors predictive of better intercultural adjustment for both multicultural and monocultural students.

Based on our exploratory quantitative analyses, it seemed that monocultural individuals may benefit more from studying abroad than multicultural individuals. For example, monocultural students, but not multicultural students, showed increases in general self-efficacy and cultural intelligence during the study abroad experience. Although the monocultural students' cultural intelligence scores were only slightly above the midpoint of the scale, our qualitative analyses suggest that studying abroad is crucial for their development of intercultural competence. It might be easy to conclude that studying abroad may not be beneficial for multicultural students, especially because they already start out with higher cultural intelligence than monocultural students; however, our qualitative analyses indicate that studying abroad challenges and develops both multicultural and monocultural students, but in different ways.

According to students' interviews, study abroad helped them with their personal development and intercultural competence. However, experiences of marginalization and lack of belonging, which potentially contribute to the development of personal and social identity as well as awareness of racism and other forms of oppression, varied by students' Spanish language proficiency and race. In Puerto Rico, where most of the population speaks Spanish (Central Intelligence Agency, 2013), non-Spanish speakers had difficulty interacting with locals and navigating daily life. In the Virgin Islands, where most of the population is Black (Central Intelligence Agency, 2013), White students felt alienated and ostracized. These challenges presumably help students to grow as people and develop empathy for marginalized members of society.

The intersection of language and race also afforded students with unique perspectives into the complexities of race and the nuances of culture in different contexts in the Caribbean. Being White non-Spanish speakers, Axel, Shawn, and Suzie got a glimpse into the lives of immigrants and their struggles communicating in a non-native language. As a multicultural Black Spanish-speaker, Bruno had the demographic characteristics and cultural/linguistic skills to fit into both Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands, but not entirely so, because he spoke Spanish with a different accent (e.g., Dominican), and Puerto Ricans value White over Black skin (Bonilla-Silva, 2010); therefore, he was able to understand the interplay and hierarchies of language and race in Caribbean society. Relatedly, other multicultural individuals (Denny, Janet, and Eunice) had the opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of cultural practices, ethnic identity, gender roles, and other relevant issues. Thus, both multicultural and monocultural (e.g., White, non-Latinx, non-Spanish speaking) students found studying abroad to be advantageous. The benefits of studying abroad can be further optimized by providing students with pre-departure cross-cultural training (Tsang, 2001) along with reentry orientation, language training to develop their language proficiency (Basow & Gaugler, 2017; Tsang, 2001), longer programs (e.g., Behrnd & Porzelt, 2012), and interactions with and social support from locals (Basow & Gaugler, 2017; Bierwiaczonek & Waldzus, 2016; Hechanova-Alampay et al., 2002; Tsang, 2001)—such as through homestays (Basow & Gaugler, 2017).

Limitations and future directions

A major limitation of our study is the conceptualization of cultural intelligence (also known as intercultural competence) in the quantitative analyses. Most theories and measures of cultural intelligence have been tested using predominantly White and male samples (e.g., Bennett, 1986), and these populations develop and manifest cultural intelligence differently from racial/ethnic minorities and women (Sparrow, 2000); therefore, it is possible that current conceptualizations of cultural intelligence may not be valid for multicultural individuals. For example, White men with high cultural intelligence transcend cultural boundaries, choose to "live on the edge of … one's culture" (Adler, 1977, p. 26), and experience "constructive marginality" as a result of voluntarily shedding their culture (Bennett, 1986; not to be confused with being marginalized via oppression), whereas racial/ethnic minorities and women with high cultural intelligence are rooted in their cultural experiences, live at the center of their cultures, and are connected to others from their cultures (Sparrow, 2000). In addition, as our interviews suggest, for multicultural individuals, greater cultural intelligence may also include a stronger ethnic identity and a deeper understanding of one's own culture (Day-Vines et al., 1998), but this may not be the case for White monocultural individuals. Therefore, future studies should develop a model of cultural intelligence and its development for multicultural individuals, and then use that framework to examine changes in the cultural intelligence of multicultural individuals while abroad.

Relatedly, despite experiencing increases in cultural intelligence, monocultural students' levels of cultural intelligence were still

lower than those of multicultural students at the end of the study abroad program. Therefore, although White monocultural students learned to empathize with oppressed groups, they may not have acquired the depth of understanding that multicultural individuals did with regard to the nuances of language, race, culture, and how those dynamics manifest themselves in society. Therefore, researchers and practitioners may want to identify strategies to more dramatically increase the cultural intelligence of White monocultural students abroad.

Finally, there were several limitations with our quantitative analyses. First, the sample size was small; therefore, small effects may not have been detected. To address this, researchers should conduct replication studies with larger samples. Second, quantitative measures in this study were administered during the first and last weeks of the study abroad program; therefore, it is uncertain whether gains in general self-efficacy and cultural intelligence are maintained over time. Future studies should consider measuring these variables weeks, months, and even years after students return from study abroad to determine the potential long-term effects of studying abroad. Third, and most importantly, there were no comparison groups (e.g., students who did not study abroad); therefore, the observed increases in general self-efficacy and cultural intelligence during the study abroad period cannot be causally attributed to the study abroad experience itself. It is possible that other factors, such as maturation or the opportunity to study away from home (and not necessarily in a different cultural environment), may have caused the observed changes in general self-efficacy and cultural intelligence. Future studies should compare short-term study-abroad students to those who studied in-country during the summer or to students who studied abroad with different program characteristics (e.g., duration, housing).

Conclusion

Although previous studies have investigated the potential benefits of studying abroad, most have used traditional study-abroad samples (i.e., White students) participating in traditional (semester-long or year-long) programs (e.g., Basow & Gaugler, 2017; Carlson & Widaman, 1998; Greenfield, Fedor, & Davis, 2012; Hadis, 2005; Ryan & Twibell, 2000; Savicki et al., 2004). In our study, we filled gaps in the literature by examining the general self-efficacy, cultural intelligence, and intercultural adjustment of both multicultural and monocultural students in a short-term (5-week) study "away-yet-abroad" program. From our findings, we can conclude that general self-efficacy and cultural intelligence is associated with better intercultural adjustment for all students (not just White monocultural students), and that students participating in this short-term study "away-yet-abroad" program exhibited gains in general self-efficacy and cultural intelligence, similar to the findings of previous research with participants in long-term international study abroad programs.

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