

THE EFFECTS OF STRESS MANAGEMENT ON COLLEGE STUDENTS'  
PERFORMANCE IN INTERNATIONALIZATION PROGRAMS

by

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A RESEARCH DISSERTATION

Submitted to the Faculty of Delaware State University  
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements of the  
Degree of Doctor of Education of Educational  
Leadership in the Department of Education

DOVER, DELAWARE  
April, 2017

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## **DEDICATION**

I begin this dedication by thanking God for my parents Otis T. Armstead and Alice M. Stith-Armstead. My mother's fine example of money management and my father's unconditional emotional support are largely the reason that this Doctorate is complete. I thank my middle sister Jeanne L. Armstead-Portis for respecting my sense of adventure, observing how ambitious I became at prepubescence and her encouragement. I am also forever grateful for the relationship I have had for many years with my Pastor, Father Daniel Begin. He was always interested in updates of my doctoral journey. He was a wonderful champion of God's truth and proclamation who departed this life very recently after a lengthy illness. This dissertation is dedicated to his and my family's memory.

I also dedicate this writing to members of my extended family and my best friends from whom I have received tremendous affection. Their encouragement has contributed to my overcoming challenges in life. I am also grateful and dedicate this writing to Julian and Judy Cummings. Their love, Julian's brilliance, sense of humor and exemplary patience, was especially helpful during periods of writer's block and data analysis.

Last but certainly not least, I dedicate this dissertation to my beloved oldest sister, Kathleen E. Lindsay. She also respected my early age ambition, sense of adventure, and loved, and nurtured me as a mother would nurture her child. She maintained a great sense of humor, and encouraged me during this journey as she struggled with her own health. Though always diminutive in stature, she became frail and her body weak as her health declined. I watched her slowly deteriorate, while still being nurturing, until I lost her just prior to my Doctoral Internship. She has been the greatest sister for whom anyone could ask. No words can sufficiently describe her contribution to my life. This dissertation is especially dedicated to her memory.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

It is with the utmost appreciation that I acknowledge all of those who played a large part in my academic growth during my pursuit of this Doctorate. First and foremost, I must give thanks to the creator, God. With His divine intervention, I was able to remain academically rigorous through each class while also working and being the primary caretaker for my oldest sister. I also extend immense gratitude and appreciation to the Dissertation Committee Members which include Dr. Richard Phillips, Dr. Patricia Carlson, Dr. Marlene Dorsey, Dr. James Chrisman and Dr. Chetanath Gautam, who committed their time, challenged me to reach greater heights and showed me what I was capable of. I extend my sincere appreciation to Dr. Richard Phillips who served as my Dissertation Committee Chairperson and my advisor in matters academic and personal as I struggled with the imminent loss of two loved ones during these last four years. He as well as my other professors have helped me to expand my understanding of Educational Leadership in the higher education and the international education sectors.

I also thank the staff of the William C. Jason Library and the John Carroll University Grasselli Library. I especially thank Librarian and Coordinator of Technical Services, Mrs. Beverly Charlot. Sometimes she was inundated with questions and inquiries about articles and journals related to higher education and international higher education. She is very knowledgeable and was helpful with accessing quantities of unusual journals and articles that facilitated the development of this dissertation. I also thank the students in my doctoral cohort. When we were given tough assignments, I remained certain that I would get through it by phone calls, lunches, dinners, group work and sometimes our collective sense of humor. It has been a pleasure to be a part of such a wonderful group of doctoral scholars and professionals. This educational journey will always have a special place in my heart.

## **ABSTRACT**

A major current issue that is facing the U.S. workforce is the need for employees who possess intercultural competence as well as cross-cultural adjustment skills. This has led to the development of study abroad programs and international internships to develop knowledgeable, skillful, interculturally competent, and professional college students who will become interculturally competent employees. However, these students often go through significant stressful changes during their time in these programs. Therefore, the purpose of this dissertation and this study was to determine how college students manage stress in internationalization programs. This research followed a qualitative method of inquiry, a phenomenological analysis, and a descriptive method for its design, wherein the researcher examined how college students responded to stressful situations during program participation.

It was found that students responded to stressful events before their trip, when they first arrived to their destination, when they lived in discomfort, when they had new experiences, when they noticed differences and experienced competition, and when they returned home. Further research is needed on the impact of stress management on overseas effectiveness for expatriates as well as college students in internationalization programs. Health records and attrition information could be gathered on the sojourners receiving stress management intervention before and after going overseas to determine its effectiveness.

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# **CHAPTER I**

## **INTRODUCTION**

Higher education institutions are interacting with an increased number and variety of communities. Each of these has its particular communication and demand on the higher education and international sectors (Jongbloed, Jürgen, & Salerno, 2008). As a result, higher education institutions, external communities and other stakeholders have developed revised relationships. Local, regional, national, and international components of these relationships have been developed as well (Enders 2004; OECD 2007). Worldwide competition and knowledge transfer characterize the globalization of higher education across borders (Teichler, 2004). The nature of the current globalization of higher education has attracted significant attention from students, faculty, staff, educators, the workplace, and policymakers. The post-secondary sector has acknowledged the importance of global education and global awareness to its students. International internships and study abroad programs are aspects of global education that universities have embraced.

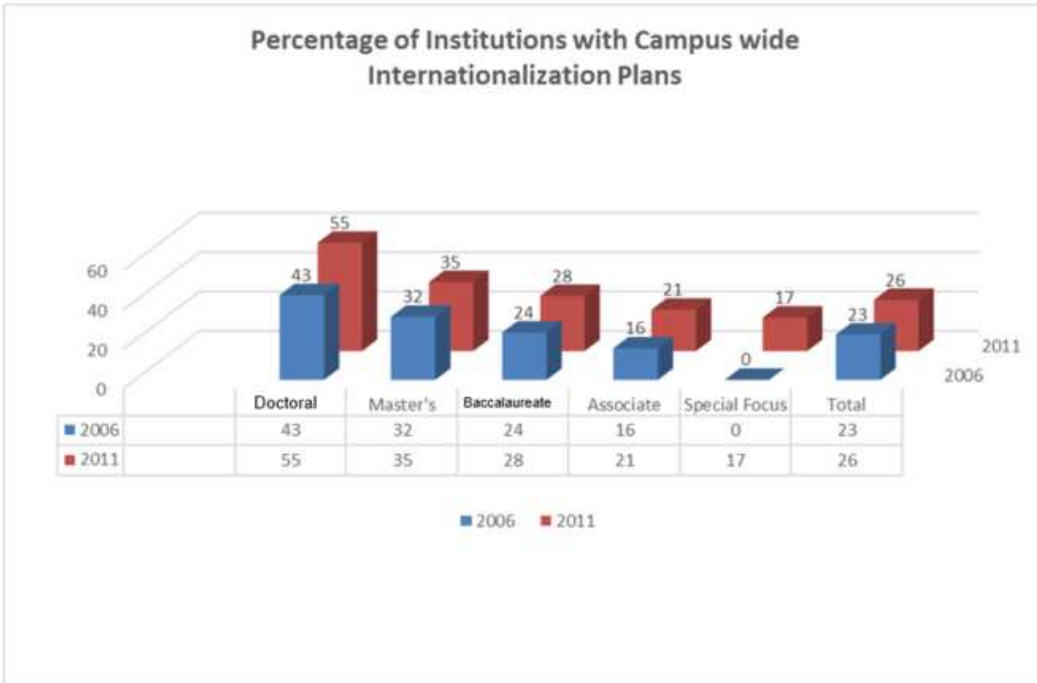
Study abroad programs are experiences for college undergraduate and graduate students who can study in a foreign nation and learn another culture. International internships are volunteer or remunerative work experiences for undergraduate and graduate students in a foreign country or in the international division of an organization in the United States. Participating students receive academic credit toward their major and direct work experience in their field (Bista & Saleh, 2014). These programs are most often sponsored by colleges, universities, nonprofit organizations, nongovernmental organizations, or independent organizations called “third-party providers” (American Council on Education, 2000).

## **1.1. Background of the Problem**

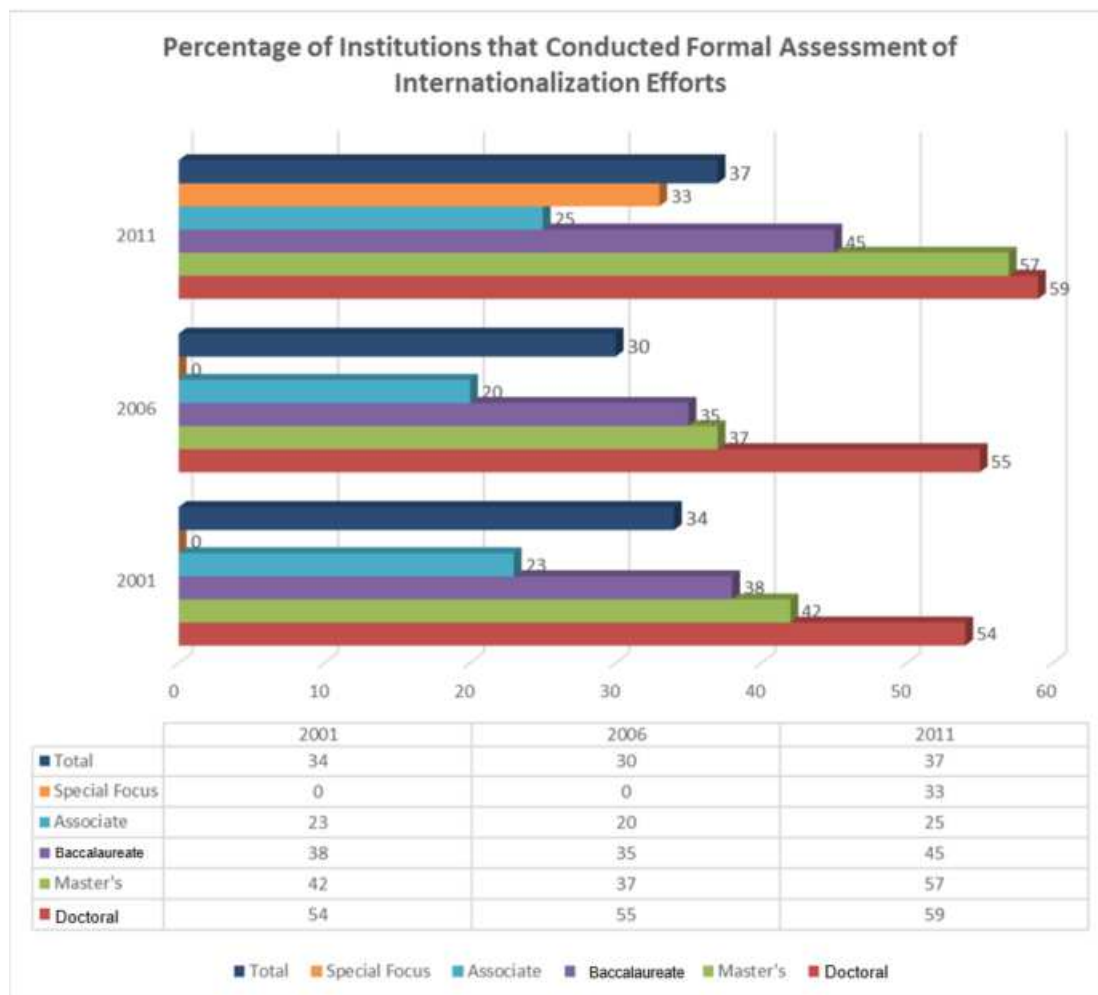
The history and study of internationalization programs, per Goodwin and Nacht (1991), began with the research conducted by the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse. Researchers discovered that the student body desired a higher level of international awareness on their campus. This strong student interest originated from their sense that a sophisticated knowledge of world affairs was necessary to obtain and retain a good job in the 20th century. With support from the faculty and administration, members of this student body eventually completed study and work-abroad programs through the university's Career Services Office. Internationalization programs began in the early 1920's by the University of Wisconsin-LaCrosse and Indiana University. However, the University of Delaware was the first university in the United States to develop a formal infrastructure that fostered the globalization of its students. Other colleges and universities began to follow suit, especially in implementing international internship programs, such as Yale University, Columbia University, the University of Michigan, and the University of Minnesota. Since then, many colleges and universities have articulated commitment to internationalization programs, and have implemented them or have developed plans for their implementation. Many higher education institutions also offer career services to facilitate students' abilities to articulate the transferable skills and competencies learned during their participation abroad. The students are assisted with how to contextualize their experiences for employers so that their experiences are not dismissed as skill building and human development platforms. Additionally, per NAFSA: Association of International Educators (2014), less than 1.5% of American students enrolled in higher education are working and studying abroad. For underrepresented populations, the percentage is much lower.

## **1.2. Need for the Study**

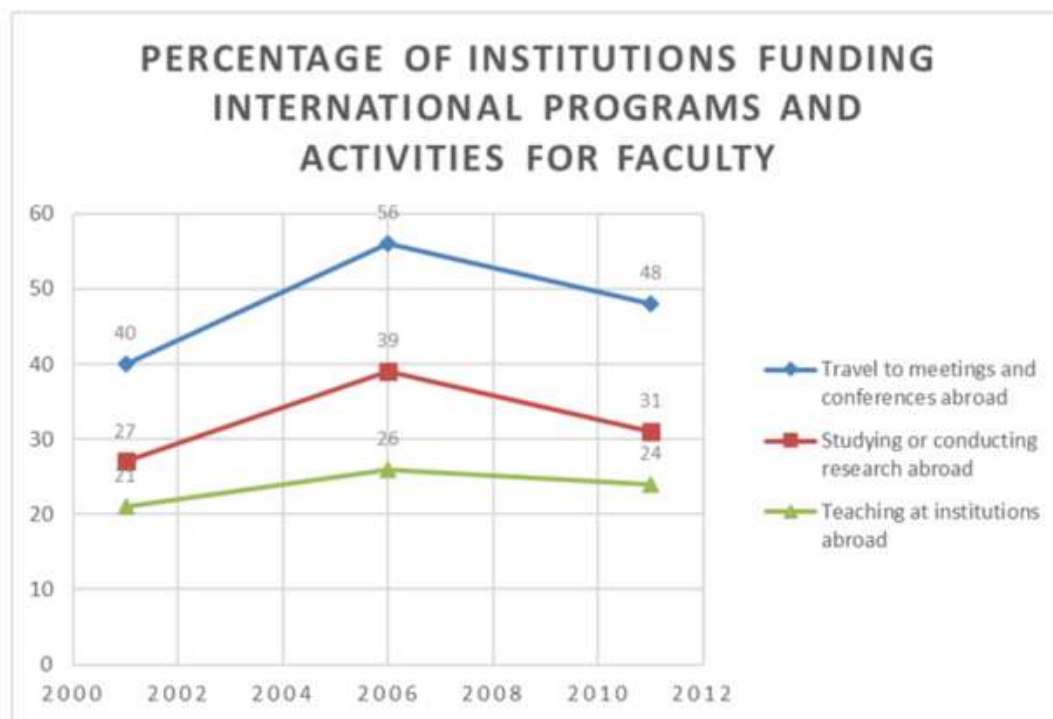
The American Council on Education's Center for Internationalization and Global Engagement is an educational center that provides in-depth analysis of critical international education issues. It also administers programs and services to support higher education institutions' internationalization and global engagement strategies. The following four figures display the percentages of several internationalization efforts from U.S. post-secondary institutions. The percentage of U.S. colleges and universities with a campus-wide internationalization plan increased in total from 23% to 26% between 2006 and 2011 (Center for Internationalization and Global Engagement, 2012), (see Figure 1). Post-secondary institutions that formally assessed the effect of their internationalization efforts saw increases from 2001 through 2011 (see Figure 2). The most substantial increases in assessment were seen at master's and baccalaureate institutions, with moderate increases at doctoral granting institutions. Figure 3 shows the percentage of institutions offering funding for internationalization programs and activities for faculty. The percentages of these institutions saw gains from 2001 through 2006. Funding for faculty leading students on study abroad programs also increased in each sector, albeit more modestly between 2001 and 2011 (Nacht, 1991).



*Figure 1.* Percentage of Institutions With Campus Wide Internationalization Plans. Adapted from The Center for Internationalization and Global Engagement, 2012.



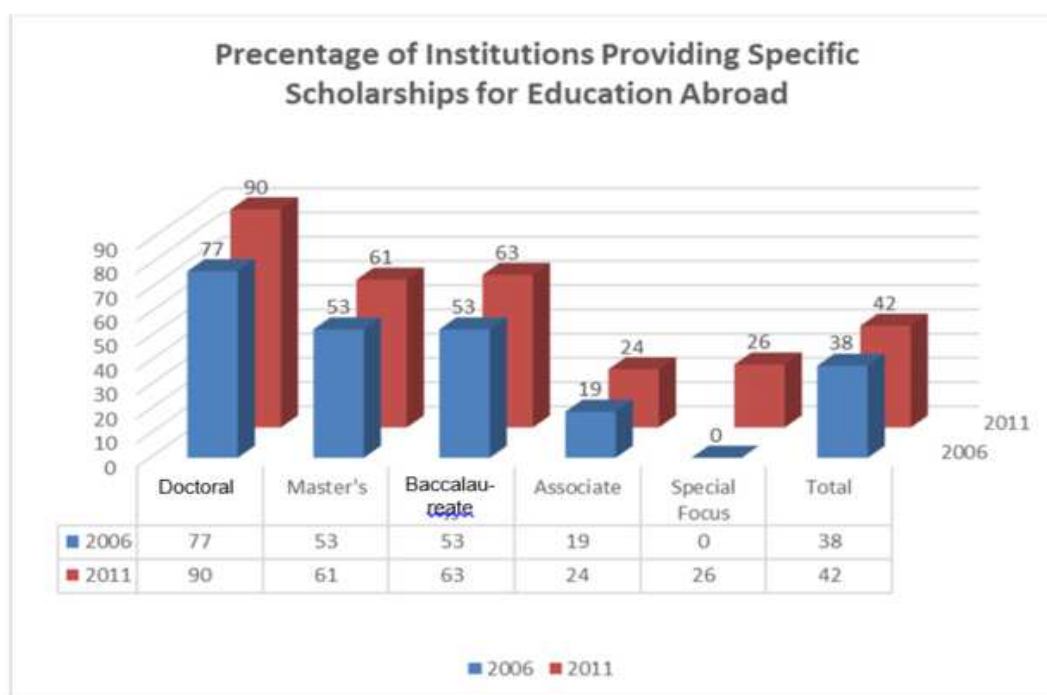
*Figure 2.* Percentage of Institutions That Conducted Formal Assessments of Internationalization Efforts. Adapted from The Center for Internationalization and Global Engagement, 2012.



*Figure 3. Percentage of Institutions Funding International Programs and Activities for Faculty. Adapted from The Center for Internationalization and Global Engagement, 2012.*

The Executive Office of the U.S. President passed the National Security Education Act in January 15, 1992. This law increased the amount of federal funding available for foreign studies and internationalization programs and was expected to give middle class, low-income students and underrepresented students more opportunities to study and work overseas (Altbach, Reisberg, & Rumbley, 2009). Figure 4 shows that the percentage of post-secondary institutions providing specific scholarships for education abroad increased in total from 38% to 42% between 2006 and 2011 (Institute of International Education, 2012). Although the National Security Education Act was intended to give these populations of students more opportunities to work and study abroad, a critically low number of these students remain in international internship and study abroad programs (Walker, Bukenya, & Thomas, 2011). Additionally, the International Monetary Fund provides financial support for highly promising college students to

gain a better understanding of global work and to contribute to the institution's mission (Ortiz, 2004). Internships and other educational programs are offered to students each year. Students often attend these programs during the summer between May and September, and during the winter from November to March.



*Figure 4.* Percentage of Institutions Providing Specific Scholarships for Education Abroad. Adapted from The Institute for International Education, 2012.

Issues related to the stress from participating in these programs surpass the ordinary stressors found at home. The stress of participating in a global internship can exacerbate the stress present in academic study or domestic employment. Students experience added stress adjusting to being alone in a foreign country, far from friends and family. Underrepresented student ethnicities or groups may also experience discriminatory practices, depending on the country where they are studying or working, which can add an additional degree of stress (Fischer, 2010). As the world becomes increasingly globalized, it is critical that college and



university students participate fully in global academic opportunities (Brux, 2010). The rapid globalization of business and the necessity for the workforce to think globally has led to technological advances, cultural changes and gradual development of an international workforce (Salt, 2008).

Salt (2008) continued to specify that subsequently, when college graduates enter the current U.S. workplace, they might find that the need for expatriates in international locations has become a requirement for many business entities. Currently, 80% of medium-sized and large-sized companies have employees abroad, and 65% expect the number to increase. In addition, 54% of the expatriates are getting younger (20–39 years old up from 41%). The trend also indicates that the number of female expatriates is increasing by 21% from an historical 15% (Brown, 2008). Employers will expect that as expatriate workers, their employees demonstrate the ability to adapt and maintain cultural identifications while they live and work abroad through to assignment completion (Ward, 1999). In the past, many expatriate assignments were highly coveted. Expatriates were usually assigned to desirable locations, received generous wages and benefits, and high-visibility training for corporate career advancement. In the 21st century, this trend seems to be reversed, with more dissatisfaction noted with international assignments because of the stress involved (Emmanuel, Haile, & Jones, 2010).

International assignments challenge companies and their expatriates. More specifically, Black and Gregersen (1999) reported that up to 20% of all U.S. managers and administrators sent abroad returned early because of job dissatisfaction; primarily, citing difficulties in managing the stress inherent in making the adjustment to a foreign country and in managing staff. This issue was also studied by Wildermuth (2005), who observed similar trends in the same key segments. Wildermuth found that approximately 50% of the international workforce relocations in the

study ended with premature return. In developing countries, the rate of premature return was observed to be as high as 70%. Rankis and Beebe (1982) estimated that early attrition rates of American expatriates before assignment completion were as high as 85% because of the stress of intercultural adjustment and communication. Additionally, Black and Mendenhall (2001) found that approximately 40% of all expatriate managers, mostly Americans, returned prematurely from their overseas assignments. The Americans returned early because of failure to manage the stress that occurs in the cross-cultural adjustment, which results in poor job performance. The problems in the workplace necessitate this study, because for nearly 50 years, researchers have attempted to pinpoint the nature and causes of the high rates of failure in American expatriate workers. Ayers and Johnson (2012) suggested that as many as 75% of all expatriate work assignments resulted in some form of failure.

A major current issue facing the U.S. workforce is the need for employees who possess intercultural competence and cross-cultural adjustment skills. Researchers Rankis and Beebe (1982) also indicated that the goal of study abroad programs and international internships is to graduate knowledgeable, skillful, interculturally competent, and professional students who will become interculturally competent employees. It is expected that the students' participation in these programs will groom them to be able to perform successfully as expatriate employees. Colleges and universities have developed these programs to accomplish such ambitions. However, if students are trained poorly for these experiences, the result may be unintended negative effects on the students' mental and emotional health that can undermine these values as well as the institutional goals and objectives in this area. Researchers Batey and Lupi (2012) also suggest that mental health declines after students begin these programs if no training or poor preparation exists. This distress can contribute to substance abuse, broken relationships, suicide,

and attrition from the college or university. Researchers have also shown that student distress contributes to cynicism and subsequently may affect students' care of themselves, their relationship with faculty, and ultimately the relationship with the host country staff (McCabe, 2005).

Internationalization programs offer educational opportunities for American post-secondary students to study and work abroad. Such programs help to reduce prejudices and misunderstandings by offering students a platform to learn about other cultures (Hamilton, 2003). In contemporary society, it is extremely important for all people to experience firsthand the effects of globalization and cultural differences (Peck, 2005). Employers have been seeking employees with cross-cultural training and previous international experiences since the 1990s (Haines, 2013).

In this study, the terms *regular* or *majority student populations* refer to Caucasian students who are not low-income, first-generation college students (meaning neither parent has a baccalaureate degree) or are not minorities or females who are pursuing male-dominated majors. Underrepresented student populations refer to U.S. citizens who qualify as one or more of the following: (a) students of color (i.e., African-American, Hispanic, Native American, and Asian), (b) low-income students, (c) first-generation college students, and (d) female students pursuing degrees in male-dominated majors. Although these categories are not all encompassing, they are utilized in internationalization programs' data and are consistent with the way the national data are represented. The researcher recognized that other underrepresented populations exist in internationalization programs, such as males in female-dominated majors, students with disabilities, and students who identify themselves as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual, or transgendered (LGBT). For the purpose of this research, only the majority student populations

and underrepresented populations specified will be mentioned and studied. The U.S. Census Bureau (2012) and the National Center on Education and the Economy (2011) projected that by 2042, people of color will collectively represent most the U.S. population. As people of color increase in population, they will represent a larger portion of the workforce and therefore require training in international employment issues, regardless of how inaccessible such training may be at this time (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012). As mentioned, several students that will participate in this study will be the students of color.

The major issues that have prevented the completion of international assignments are the stress from culture shock, language barriers, unfamiliarity with local customs, the culture and its people, as well as concerns regarding job performance. One reason why people experience culture shock is that they feel overwhelmed by all the new things in the host environment (University of Maryland, 2013). A premature return is expensive to both the individual and the organization. The return results in compromised operations in the host country, the loss of company market share to competitors, and the loss of credibility with international clients. Additionally, expatriate staffing and training programs can be expensive and complex, particularly when the parent company must pay taxes for its employees in both countries (Deresky, 2011).

Companies competing in global markets recognize the need for future hires (college graduates) to understand diverse cultures, customs regulations, and effective stress management to succeed in an international environment (Kemmerer, 2008). Fisher (2005) cited the following major areas in which college graduates must be proficient:

- stress management in the duties that must be carried out
- stress management in managing change and ambiguity

- acceptance of the length of the foreign assignment
- the differences in the norms and the culture for communication
- appropriate frequency of communication
- appropriate modes of communication (face to face, oral, e-mail, written)
- formality of communication required.

Per the American Council on Education (2012), two primary ways exist that higher education has previously attempted to address the aforementioned issues. These experiences are through structured study-abroad programs and international internships.

This study will provide increased understanding regarding the need for stress management for college students in internationalization programs to prepare them for stress management as expatriate employees. College is a stressful time for many students as they go through the process of adapting to educational and social environments. College can be even more stressful for students participating in internationalization programs. These students have the added strain of learning different cultures, such as cultural values and sometimes another language in addition to academic preparation. As stressors accumulate, they can overtax an individual's coping resources, depleting his or her physical or psychological reserves. In turn, an increased probability exists that physical illness or psychological distress will follow (Mori, 2000). Walton (1990) specified that the effects of stress management training on overseas employment effectiveness warrants further research. Kahn (2010) stated that it is widely believed that internationalization programs are important in the personal growth of college students, as they provide the students with an opportunity to observe and explore beliefs and lifestyles that may be quite different from those they have been taught. These experiences can lead students to question their own values and attitudes, ideally resulting in an increased understanding of

themselves. The journey abroad not only provides students with the freedom to discover, but it also tests students' survival and stress management skills beyond the support of the home campus (Soneson, 2009).

The level of independence required of college students abroad varies largely from program to program, as does the level of administrative support for programs. Still, in all cases, students find themselves confronted with situations and problems that are frustrating, and with which they must learn to cope on their own, with little immediate assistance from the home campus. These conditions are like what they would face as expatriates in the workplace (Juhasz, McCreary, & Walker, 1988).

Sovic (2008) indicated students participating in internationalization programs need to learn stress management techniques. Not only can students and expatriates experience culture shock, but they also can experience *academic shock*. Academic shock involves difficulty in transitioning to a different system of teaching, training, and learning (Zhou, Jindal-Snape, Topping, & Todman, 2008). Sovic stated that some students and expatriates have experienced difficulty communicating with their tutors, described as *social shock*.

The existing literature on the lack of diversity in post-secondary overseas programs has an historical timeline from the late 1980's. The 1990 Report of the Advisory Council for International Educational Exchange (CIEE), Educating for Global Competence, and Booth (1991) stated, "Efforts to expand the number of American undergraduates abroad must address the lack of diversity among them" (p. 3). A committee was implemented in 1988 by CIEE's Board of Directors. It was called the Committee on Underrepresented Groups in Overseas Programs whose primary purpose was to address the paucity of underrepresented students in internationalization programs. The topic of CIEE's 43rd international conference was

International Education: Broadening the Base of Participation, which dealt specifically with underrepresented students studying and working abroad, which is still relevant. The need for such broadening is apparent among all underrepresented student populations. Additional researchers reiterated the low percentage of underrepresented student populations studying and working abroad as well as described the barriers to increased enrollment of such students (Sweeney, 2013). In 2005, the annual National Association of Foreign Student Advisors, Association of International Educators conference included various speakers who addressed the low numbers of underrepresented students participating in these programs. Identified barriers included (a) fear of discrimination abroad, (b) discouragement from families who saw these programs as an unnecessary luxury, (c) students having to work to support themselves and families, and (d) international experiences were not common among many of the students' faculty advisors who were also from underrepresented populations (Monaghan, 2004).

The American Council on Education (2002) conducted a study and found that 75% of the public, with broad representation across race, gender, and education levels, believe that college students should study or work abroad. High school students studied also expressed intentions to fulfill those expectations. Of those surveyed, 48% of college-bound seniors expressed the desire to study abroad, and another 28% planned to pursue international internships (Hayward & Siaya, 2001). International internship programs have a host of benefits to the individual students and the society to which they contribute. As a society, Americans benefit from the experience and language skills that the students bring back with them from foreign-based programs. These benefits can translate into national security gains, with returning students as prime candidates for numerous government jobs requiring foreign language skills. The U.S. government recognized this need; however, the demand for such programs is growing (Hacker & Pierson, 2016).

Beyond national security, returning students can also use their language and cultural skills to improve America's economy in the future. Corporations in the United States are increasingly multinational and need workers who can intelligently lead and cultivate expansion into other regions of the world. With culturally and linguistically fluent post-secondary graduates, the public and private sectors can be better prepared to manage and make use of the diversity in foreign markets (Monaghan, 2004).

### **1.3. Significance of the Study**

This study is practically significant because of the need for jobs when college students graduate and the demand for employees who possess multinational leadership experience. These experiences can include living abroad, or working on projects, assignments, or business units that require a large deal of collaboration with associates in multiple countries. Foster (1997) noted that the influence of expatriate families on an employee's adjustment and assignment success was frequently accompanied by stress. An expatriate's assignment will inherently require managing stress, change, new experiences, and challenges resulting in increased stress. Some specific sources of stress are relationship strains, unmet expectations, concerns about assignment completion and the local environment (Brown, 2008). Coping with a different way of life and a foreign work environment can cause an expatriate to experience increased stress levels, which could then dictate how well he or she adjusts and feels about living and working abroad. Researchers have confirmed that expatriates who are unable to adjust to work and life at host country locations are likely to perform poorly at their assignments (Selmer & Leung, 2007).

Expatriate failure rates have remained high enough to justify further research (Peng, 2009). Foster (1997) also indicated that a gap exists between the workplace and post-secondary education, which makes this study unique. This study is significant because employers need



employees and the college students need jobs upon graduation. Through this study, the researcher will also investigate the effect of Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) also known as meditation or quiet time on college students' performance as a possible stress reduction solution. This practice is significant because Baer's (2003) review and Kabat-Zinn (2003) suggests that mindfulness-based interventions are efficacious, but that better designed studies are needed to substantiate the field and place it on a firm foundation for future growth. Kabat-Zinn also states that the scientific study of mindfulness and MBSR to date is in its infancy. Therefore, it is not uncommon for the first generation of studies to be more descriptive of the phenomenon.

This research will also add new aspects to the body of knowledge concerning students' academic and international stressors and their reactions to those stressors that can be used to frame further research. In addition, many students, particularly underrepresented populations, are not obtaining many of the expatriate positions, nor are they participating in internationalization programs to educate them for such. The underrepresented populations that will participate in this study are less likely than the majority populations to have such experience. These populations are also less likely to have experience as a successful participant in an internationalization program, which could prepare them for multinational leadership experiences. In addition, much of the research to date has not clearly delineated the nature of stressful, threatening situations that students encounter during cultural adaptation while participating in such programs. Future students, post-secondary institutions, program host organizations, and the current U.S. work culture and workplace will benefit from this study.

Related issues of import arising from this proposed study are findings that could facilitate addressing the unique needs of a broad range of majority college students and underrepresented

college students to increase their participation in internationalization programs. Study findings may also allow local, state, and federal educational entities to properly address the low participation rate of the underrepresented student populations examined in these programs (Jorgenson & Schultz, 2012).

#### **1.4. Purpose of the Study**

This study's purpose was to ascertain how college students manage stress in internationalization programs. The similarities and differences in how the students manage the stress was also determined. The effect this had on their academic and work performance in the program was determined by course grade.

The grades are determined by how the students function in the class. Grades are based on attendance, timeliness of attendance and assignments as well as accuracy of assignment submission. Assignments usually consist of written papers, oral presentations, readings, class projects (individually and collectively), as well as participation in class discussions, mid-term and final exams. Most classes for these programs have no prerequisites. Students meet with their academic advisor to discuss which courses are best fit with the requirements for their major.

#### **1.5. Theoretical Framework**

This study involved the U-curve theory of adjustment by Lysgaard (1955) and the W-curve theory of adjustment by Gullahorn and Gullahorn (1963) as the theoretical frameworks. These theories focus on cross-cultural adjustment issues and address ways of adjustment to host countries unlike one's own. Higher education institutions have extensively used Lysgaard's theoretical work in all aspects of post-secondary internationalization programs, albeit more frequently with study abroad programs than with international internships. Lysgaard's U-curve theory provides details regarding the four stages of adjustment that emerge as students and

employees proceed through the expatriate experience. Gullahorn and Gullahorn (1963) described a W-curve theory upon the return home that is similar to Lysgaard's (1955) research.

Gullahorn and Gullahorn (1963) provided details on the five stages of repatriation adjustment that emerge as students return home from their overseas assignments. Gullahorn and Gullahorn's theory proposes that there can be a multistage wave of adjustment in response to acculturation back home. The researcher compared these theoretical constructs with the data collected from the participants.

Haines (2013) conducted a study to show the development of a group of 22 students who went overseas for educational purposes and as part of broader research on diversity at a diverse American university. The purpose of Haines' study was to focus on the general dynamics of the return experience (Gullahorn & Gullahorn, 1963). In addition to American students, some of the students were people who grew up overseas. Others went overseas for education or for military service. The overseas experience broadened the students' perspectives, but also individuated them by removing established routines, inserting them in new patterns overseas, and reinserting them back into the United States. The students participated in a series of exploratory interviews. Haines considered the experience of the students who went abroad, and then returned as students in higher education. The students indicated mixed responses upon return (Haines, 2013). Some were triumphant, others involved few changes or many changes, and some felt the experience was life draining. However, the returning veterans who had served overseas immediately readjusted to American life.

What made the study difficult for Haines (2013) was the grouping together of veterans, study abroad students, and *third culture kids* (children raised in a culture outside of their parents' culture for a significant part of their development years) within the same general framework

(Selmer & Lam 2004). In addition, once the group went overseas, each of the three groups went their separate ways.

Haine's (2013) study was also limited in the area of demographics. A more diverse population could have also been stronger with specificity related to the numbers and percentages of the students in reference to the students' age ranges, gender, ethnicity, veteran status, and numbers of undergraduate and graduate students (Haines, 2013). Haines also did not focus the analysis on the differences in the veteran population, the third culture study abroad students, and the American students. Additionally, the researcher did not break down the numbers of students in each of the three groups (Haines, 2013). Haines could have also specified their lengths of stay in the country and purpose of their stays abroad. In addition, the researcher could have provided more information regarding the university from where the students came, such as the name of the university or its region in the country.

Other than the limitations, the study was informative. One of the aims of internationalization programs besides developing intercultural competence in college students is to reduce discrimination, stereotyping, and to create social awareness and positive attitudes towards other cultures. It would be conducive to the workplace to carry out the research on the training of employees. Haines (2013) indicated that this group of participants is not an example and that it may well be impossible to ever construct returnees as a defined population that can be sampled. The findings could assist educational leaders and leaders in the employment sector with necessary preparation in the development of students and employees into highly interculturally competent individuals.

## **1.6. Definitions of Terms**

The standard terms listed are defined for this study.

Cross cultural adjustment: Patterns of learned perception, behavior, attitudes, and beliefs shared by a group of individuals and the ability to adjust to them.

Culture shock: Confrontation with new and unfamiliar situations or realities that challenge preconceived notions. The dilemmas prompt new ways of interpreting experiences leading to changes in attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors.

Effective: Effective is the success in producing an intended result; or a specified function in which an activity fulfills its desired purpose. It answers the question, “Does it work?” (McDavid & Hawthorn, 2006).

Exchange programs: Intercultural learning experiences that bring global cultures together by helping people connect, transforming the lives of thousands of students, families, and individuals through study abroad programs, volunteerism, or internships.

Globalization: In the higher education context, an educational process that provides students with an understanding of the global nature of issues, a knowledge of other cultures, languages, and histories, and the ability to function in different cultural settings.

Host organization: An organization that sponsors internationalization programs; also, called “foreign” country national.

Intercultural competence: The ability to communicate effectively and appropriately with people of other cultures.

International education: Educational studies or activities involving two or more nations, for facilitating cross-cultural knowledge and understanding.

International (global or overseas) Internships: Temporary work positions that may be remunerative or non-remunerative. They are the exchange of services for experience between the

college student and an organization requiring the student to work in a foreign country and culture.

International internship programs: Organizations that customize international internships (work experiences) to fit each student's personal and professional goals as well as to fit the organizations' mission.

International internship students: Students preparing to participate or those participating in internships abroad.

Internationalization: A process or set of processes that will meet the needs of users in many countries or can be easily adapted to do so. This can include transformations in social relations and transactions, generating transcontinental flows and networks of activity, interaction, and power (Liebowitz & Margolis, 1990).

Meditation (or quiet time): The act or process of spending quiet time by remaining in silence, usually with eyes closed for a period of time, as a method of relaxation and stress management.

Mindfulness-based programs: Programs designed initially to assist interns with managing stress in a range of conditions and life issues usually through meditation.

Nongovernmental organizations: Any nonprofit voluntary citizens' group organized on a local, national, or international level.

Stress management: Refers to the wide spectrum of techniques and psychotherapies aimed at controlling a person's stress levels, especially chronic stress.

Stress management in the workplace: The many different factors that can contribute to stress at work and what workforce programs exist to help employees manage it.

Study abroad programs: Organizations that customize educational opportunities for study in a country other than the students' own. Many of these programs add service learning or a work component to them.

Study abroad students: Students preparing to participate or those participating in study or service learning abroad.

Third party provider: A professional organization engaged by a company to provide services for and in the name of the organization to the company's clients.

### **1.7. Research Questions**

The following research questions guided this study.

#### **Research Question 1:**

How are college students in internationalization programs addressing stressful experiences of adjustment to living in a foreign country?

#### **Research Question 2:**

How do college students in internationalization programs experience being in a foreign country?

#### **Research Question 3:**

How do college students in internationalization programs experience returning home?

#### **Research Question 4:**

Which stress management techniques are effective in helping college students cope with stress during an internationalization program?

### **1.8. Relevance to Educational Leadership**

Internationalization programs are relevant to educational leadership, and more specifically, to higher education, in several ways. Faculty members in undergraduate and

graduate education should strive to impart global leadership and stress management skills to students during internationalization programs. Chronic stress that interferes with the ability to function normally is on the rise in American society according to the American Psychological Association (2009). Two areas where stress clearly manifests itself include the workplace and college. Employees and college students are vulnerable to stress because the workplace has rapidly changed to an international employment sector. Per Childress (2012), to adapt, the college graduates must be able to meet workplace demands existing in an international context. Additionally, most post-secondary institutions are informing students of these issues and are making efforts to improve the way they prepare their students for this reality as they enter a global workforce. Childress also pointed out that students, faculty, and employees need to be prepared for a life of geographic and organizational mobility.

Faculty members must be globally, psychologically, and culturally prepared for this leadership role themselves. Often, the faculty members assume supervisory or instructional roles in these programs for various reasons, such as tenure promotion, an opportunity to live abroad, or to receive overload pay. Instead, the reasons should be the pursuit of cultural competency for themselves and their students. As a fault of higher education administration leadership, faculty members' intercultural preparedness is not always considered in these international assignments. Colleges and universities must also monitor the work of providers and organizations that host internationalization programs to ensure they are meeting students' needs as well as their own goals and objectives. The best way to ensure that placements match students' interests begins with clearly defined application instructions, which include an essay, a résumé, and possibly an interview, so that program providers obtain a complete picture of the student. In addition, the post-secondary institutions and internationalization program providers need to assist the students



with managing the stress that can come from culture shock and discrimination (Gliozzo, 2011). The leadership theories that this study tested are outlined in the section Theoretical Framework in Chapter II.

The aforementioned issues are relevant to educational leadership, because effective leadership must benefit all stakeholders in post-secondary internationalization programs. Stakeholders include students, faculty, home and host institutions, internship and study abroad sponsors, and (ultimately) future employers. This study can facilitate the improvement of student achievement through their internationalization program. It can also give educational leaders pertinent information so they may provide better support and more resources to their students to ensure success in internationalization programs; particularly those students who struggle with Gullahorn and Gullahorn's (1963) W-curve response to returning home and the stress that may accompany it. Chapter II further details this and Lysgaard's (1955) U-curve theory. The issues cited also shed light on the issues of each of the underrepresented groups during their participation. Furthermore, this study can add a new body of knowledge and research in the field of educational leadership for higher education and other areas involved in stress management in post-secondary internationalization programs.

### **1.9. Research Design**

This research followed a qualitative method of inquiry, a phenomenological analysis, and a descriptive method for its design. The researcher examined how college students responded to stressful situations during program participation. The researcher also discussed and recorded the lived experiences of 10 U.S. post-secondary students from majority and underrepresented populations. A questionnaire aided in data collection in the attempt to answer the research questions (see Appendix A). The study involved data gathered from 10 students from the

delineated populations who participated in semi structured interviews. Appendix B contains the interview questions.

Per Creswell (2009), “Qualitative research is a means for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem” (p. 4). Through this study, the researcher explored the perceptions and opinions of 10 college students relating to their participation in an internationalization program and their management of stress. The researcher focused on the experiential narratives of the participant pool, disregarding the opinions of the researcher and those of the public.

Each student was interviewed at least once. The interviews were guided by several questions designed by the Assessment and Research department of Kent State University. The interviews were also based on participants’ own feedback about their experiences and the stress levels at the time of the interview. The interview questions were the same for each participant based on their levels of participation and the ensuing results in stress management as well as their participation in a study abroad program or an international internship at the time of the interview. The students completed a questionnaire regarding their stress levels during and after their overseas excursions, a method recommended by Kraimer (2001). This allowed the researcher to become knowledgeable about the participants’ experience and the stress management techniques used in a foreign setting.

#### **1.9.1. Potential Assessment Issues**

The students’ stress condition, their attitudes toward their experience, and their job or academic performance were assessed by a Stress Assessment Questionnaire and an individual interview. The Director of Assessment and Research at Kent State University prepared the Stress Assessment Questionnaire and the Cultural Adaptation Interview Questions.

### **1.10. Study Subjects and Participants**

The 10 students were recruited from the majority students and underrepresented populations of students who were accepted into the internationalization programs. These students included: (a) students of color (i.e., African-American, Hispanic, Native American, and Asian), (b) low-income students, (c) first-generation college students, (d) female students pursuing degrees in male-dominated majors and, (e) the majority students. To be accepted into the internationalization programs, the students must have already studied at least 1 year at a university. Many internationalization programs require a minimum of at least a 2.75 cumulative GPA. The more competitive programs can require a 3.0 cumulative GPA or even a 3.5. General qualifications for recruitment include good academic standing, letters of recommendation and to be at least 19 years old.

The researcher gathered necessary data from (a) questionnaires e-mailed to the students, and (b) semi structured interviews, with students attending a university in Northeast Ohio. These subjects were studied through an engagement in their internationalization program and their stress management practices.

### **1.11. Data Collection Procedures**

This researcher collected data by conducting personal interviews with the students, administering questionnaires regarding the attitudes and stress levels of the students relative to their respective program after IRB approval was given by signed informed consent. IRB approval is an institutional approval. Informed consent is required of study participants, usually as a condition of the institution's IRB approval. The questionnaires were multiple choice and addressed stress levels (a) during the program, (b) nearing the end, (c) at the end of their respective programs and the return home to collect the data in the students' settings. The results

of the questionnaires were calculated by organizing the collected data in a two-column table sorted per each respondent's answers to the questions. Personal interviews conducted with the students were semi-structured, recorded, and transcribed.

### **1.12. Limitations**

Two ethical issues began to arise in the research process (i.e., the sharing of educational information and sharing of program evaluations by the program administrators). To remain in compliance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, this researcher followed all university procedures to ensure the confidentiality of each participant by seeking the program participants' informed consent in writing. Therefore, confidentiality and anonymity was respected.

All research involving human subjects must be reviewed by the Institutional Review Board, Human Subjects Protection Committee at Delaware State University. During the review process, the board follows various guidelines in reviewing the research protocol to ensure that it complies with federal and state regulations, and in accordance with Delaware State University's institutional assurance compliance filed with the Office for Protection from Research Risks. Submission of a protocol to the IRB and subsequent approval of the project entailed that the IRB Human Subjects Protection Committee found the protocol to conform to scientific, ethical, and legal standards for research involving human subjects. All survey forms that entail research activities that may involve little or no risk to subjects may be submitted to the Office of Sponsored Programs for approval.

A limitation of this study was that the researcher focused only on organizational and supervisory support. Future researchers should consider examining additional sources of support, such as that provided by coworkers, subordinates, and friends outside of the university.

### **1.13. Delimitations**

This study was limited to students at a university in Northeast Ohio who were eligible to participate in internationalization programs, and students who were involved in dual enrollment programs as well. The participating students were comprised of those who have earned between a minimum of a 2.75 and 3.0 cumulative grade point average. The participants were required to be at least 19 years old.

### **1.14. Chapter Summary**

The globalization of the workplace has marked the significant increase in college students' participation in internationalization programs worldwide. In the United States, it has resulted in an increase of American students as participants in these programs, including the underrepresented student body. However, a large need exists for more American students to participate in such programs to more adequately prepare themselves for the workplace upon college graduation.

Students' participation in these programs does not occur without issues. They struggle with how to adapt themselves to another country and culture as well as the completion of their assignments. These struggles are like what they will face as expatriates in an international workforce. The models of researchers, such as Lysgaard (1955) and Gullahorn and Gullahorn (1963), in reference to these issues have informed this study.

This chapter informed the current study by explaining the demand for employees and college graduates who possess multinational leadership experience. The chapter also delineated the nature of the stressful, threatening situations that students encounter during cultural adaptation while participating in such programs as well as issues that may have a positive influence. Chapter II is a critical summary of what the academic literature says about the specific

topics of international internships, stress management, study abroad programs and foreign students' participation in internationalization programs in the United States.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

This chapter details the literature search strategy obtained for this study and theoretical framework. The chapter also covers a review of professional and relevant literature for the following categories: international internships, Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR), study abroad, and international students in the United States and other countries.

This chapter presents information about the U-curve and W-curve theoretical frameworks and their development as well as the stressful challenges students face in these programs and upon their return home. The chapter presents research regarding a possible, effective stress management technique.

#### **2.1. Literature Search Strategy**

The researcher obtained the literature compiled for this review through comprehensive online library search methods. A librarian also assisted in determining the best search methodology, and helped generate ideas regarding keywords to search. Among the journal databases searched, those that generated the most applicable results were SAGE, JSTOR, EBSCO, Wiley, and Elsevier.

The researcher accessed a multitude of other databases in the search process as well. Prior to generating the returns, the peer-reviewed feature was selected, ensuring that the literature generated would fit this designation. Most of the research came from among the leading scholarly journals in the field of higher education.

This researcher reviewed current literature that contains empirical research in the most salient areas, which appeared in a wide range of publications, such as *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education*, *Global Higher Education*, *Higher Education*, *Innovative Higher*

*Education, International Higher Education, Studies in Higher Education, The Journal of Higher Education, Journal of Marketing for Higher Education, Journal of Studies in International Education, International Journal of Human Resource Management, International Journal of Stress Management, Journal of International Business Studies, Medical Education, and Teacher Education Quarterly.* The researcher also identified articles through searches conducted through Google Scholar with a preference for peer-reviewed journals, and through Internet search engines, such as Google, Google Scholar, and Scirus, with a filter applied for peer-reviewed journals. Additionally, once the researcher identified key authors in this way, the corpus of their work was reviewed for other relevant research and works cited by those authors. Equally, the researcher reviewed identified journals, especially in specifically themed issues, for other relevant work.

## **2.2. Theoretical Framework**

As mentioned in Chapter I, this study involved the U-curve theory of adjustment by Lysgaard (1955) and the W-curve theory of adjustment by Gullahorn and Gullahorn (1963) as the theoretical frameworks. Lysgaard's (1955) U-curve theory provides details on stages of adjustment and adaptation that students and employees experience during the expatriate experience. Gullahorn and Gullahorn's W-curve theory details the adaptation process upon the return home. Adjusting to a culture closer in characteristics to one's own can reduce stress arising from psychological uncertainty engendered by a new learning experience (Black & Gregersen, 1991). The U-curve framework has been used to describe the cross-cultural adjustment process of expatriate sojourners or interns within a host culture (Black & Mendenhall, 1990; Lysgaard, 1955; Usunier, 1998). The theory provides four detailed stages of adjustment that occur when one is transitioning from home to the host country.



Subsequent research and application of Lysgaard's (1955) theory have provided guidance in ways to facilitate academic achievement and student learning during participation in these programs so that students can fulfill their purposes. Student learning is the *raison d'être* for the post-secondary internationalization program enterprise. The U-curve theory stages of adjustment begin with the honeymoon or entry stage, which occurs during the first week after arrival in the host country. Individuals are fascinated by the new and different culture. When they begin their encounter with real conditions daily, the second stage, culture shock, begins. This stage is characterized by a high level of stress, frustration, and hostility towards the host country and its people. The third stage, the adjustment or the acculturation stage, commences when the individual begins to adapt one's behavior to the customs and expectations of the host country, and can behave more appropriately than he or she could before. In the fourth and final stage, the acceptance or mastery stage, individuals can function more effectively in the new culture. The degrees of adjustment and acceptance are not measured by conformity to the host country's culture but rather in terms of comfort or acceptance of the new environment. This includes attitudes, contact with host nationals, and managing stress of challenges that arise with the new environment (Black & Mendenhall, 1990; Torbiorn, 1982). Black, Mendenhall, and Oddou (1990) stated that the shift from culture shock to adjustment is a function of the individual's ability to learn and reproduce new behaviors, thereby reducing the anxiety associated with not knowing how to behave appropriately. Willingness to establish relationships with host country nationals would also be expected to shorten the time it takes to reach the adjustment and acceptance stages. Thus, the U-curve pattern of adjustment for an individual with a high willingness to establish relationships with host country nationals would be more compacted than

a pattern of adjustment for an individual with a low willingness to establish relationships with host country nationals (Lysgaard, 1955).

Lysgaard (1955) first proposed a four-phase U-curve hypothesis of intercultural adjustment based on the research of 200 Norwegian college students participating in a study abroad program in the United States. The students ranged in age from less than 20 to 60 or older. The participants attended American universities, their stays lasting from three months to three years with an average stay being one year. Dr. Lysgaard interviewed the students for an hour and a half. He discovered that in the introductory stage, the students' energies were focused on searching for available facilities for work and pleasure, in observing American patterns of living, and in familiarizing oneself with the routines of everyday life in work and leisure. The students seemed happy making acquaintances among the personnel at the institution in which one works and making the first contacts in America. They were gratified by the adventure of being abroad and seeing new things. The students were impressed by the material facilities available and pleased with the apparent ease with which contacts were made in America. During this entry stage, social contacts were still somewhat superficial.

After some time, however, the pleasures of the entry phase began to lose their appeal and a need made itself felt for more intimate personal contact and integration into groups. The busy days and programs disturbed the restful and relaxed attitude to which some had become accustomed. The participants found that a relaxed attitude, to an extent, was required for personal involvement with friends. However, the grantees may have been somewhat reserved and hesitant as to such personal involvement in the still only superficially known milieu. Furthermore, most grantees did not have the opportunity to see people in their homes under

relaxed rather than professional circumstances. Social life took place in crowded student rooms, in cars, or in restaurants (Lysgaard, 1955).

Consequently, during the culture shock stage, the need for personal involvement in friendship groups was not being met and a feeling of loneliness developed. The students felt somewhat out of place and tended to blame the society they visited for this unhappy dilemma. The participants experienced difficulty in achieving real rather than superficial personal contact with Americans. They decided they would not like to settle down in the United States, began feeling different and superior to Americans. Lysgaard found that when students passed through the U-curve, disorientation was common. Their reality base had been challenged. The rules for interaction no longer worked. Behavior that elicited a desired response in their own culture brought a different response in the new culture. New cultures can have a different value system as well as different role expectations. In this connection, a language problem also existed (Lysgaard, 1955). When more profound personal involvement is required to get the job done or studying goals met, new demands are placed on language proficiency.

Students who in the introductory stage thought that they had really no language problem, suddenly found that their knowledge of the American culture did not at all satisfy their new needs for more intimate conversation (Lysgaard, 1955). This exaggerated the feeling of loneliness in this adjustment or acculturation stage.

After some time, most of the students learned to overcome the adjustment problems encountered in the loneliness stage. The participants began to make friends and achieved more satisfaction out of their social life. During the mastery or acceptance stage, the students became integrated into some social group and they began to feel more like regular members of the

community. To summarize, Dr. Sverre Lysgaard (1955) observed that this adjustment as a process over time seems to follow a U-shaped curve.

Gullahorn and Gullahorn (1963) expanded the U-curve theory, proposing the W-curve theory, in which the researchers conceptualized the theory as having two of the letter U joined together. Gullahorn and Gullahorn pointed out that an adjustment process can also take place on returning home, which resembles the initial adjustment in the host country, taking the name of reverse culture shock. The second U represents the sojourner's experience upon the return home. The second U also depicts that, once home, he or she again experiences a plethora of negative emotions during the re-entry process, but regains a positive outlook as time passes. The W-curve extends beyond the U-curve to describe a re-adjustment period when the visitor returns home again, or a repatriation experience. This is similar to the experiences he or she may have had during the initial involvement and coming-to-terms phases during the initial visit to the foreign country where the internationalization program took place (Sun & Chen, 1999).

Looking at the total cross-cultural exchange experience, Gullahorn and Gullahorn (1963) suggested a W-curve, instead of the U-curve. The W-curve describes and characterizes the temporal patterning of individual reactions to foreign settings, and subsequently to their own home cultures. This is especially true when the student or expatriate returns home from their sojourn. Gullahorn and Gullahorn contended against other researchers that post adjustment problems among sojourners do exist in terms of patterns of interpersonal relations and interaction in the United States as well as abroad. This readjustment involves the acculturation overseas and the resocialization after the sojourn.

Gullahorn and Gullahorn (1963) recommended an extension of the U-curve to a W-curve, which they concluded describes the sojourn more accurately. The researchers also suggested that

adapting to a new culture might leave sojourners with expectations and behaviors incompatible with their own home culture. Having shaped their values abroad, students returning home find that they are out of step with their own culture. American practices that they previously accepted may prove trying or annoying upon their return. Upon returning to their home country, sojourners experience a second decrease in adjustment followed by a second recovery stage. Some experience no emotional adjustment; some may experience a very mild emotional dissonance; and others have an ongoing battle with feelings of isolation, alienation, and hopelessness (Gullahorn & Gullahorn, 1963). Just as adapting to a new environment away from home causes emotional stress and anxiety, so can re-adapting to one's own home culture after an extended period in another country. This is referred to as reentry shock, reverse culture shock, reentry adjustment, or readjustment (Brux, 2010). Dr. Jeanne E. Gullahorn and Dr. John T. Gullahorn suggested that students going abroad need to be educated about possible negative reactions to their own home culture and they might need support and a chance to discuss their experiences upon their return. The researchers also suggested that college and university professionals may need to respond with programs for assisting the students with the reentry process (Gullahorn & Gullahorn, 1963).

Lucas (2009) contended that the U-curve and W-curve models conceived by Lysgaard (1955) and Gullahorn and Gullahorn (1963) were the standard descriptions of how a student abroad related to the host culture as well as the return home. Intercultural training still involves common use of the models. The models predict that students will experience the host culture initially as a series of emotional highs followed by a period of discomfort as their cultural beliefs are challenged. Finally, students return to comfort within the host culture and as knowledge and skills increase, many experience similar feelings returning home. (Gullahorn and Gullahorn,

1963) further stated that the models capture the anxiety many researchers associate with the process of adaptation to a new culture, called culture shock and reverse culture shock. Lucas (2009) also stated that in the final stage of adjustment, the expatriate may remain at a slightly lower level of satisfaction than before the assignment because of a continued feeling of partial alienation, but may or may not continue the assignment to completion. Gaw (2000), Wielkiewicz and Turkowski (2010), Storti (2001), and Demes and Geeraert (2015) have indicated that although some sojourners may never experience reentry adjustment, for others the response to the adjustment process can be from mild to severe.

## **2.3. A Review of the Professional and Relevant Literature**

### **2.3.1. International Internships**

Many benefits exist for college students participating in international internship programs. Students who have participated in international internship programs reported and demonstrated that their experiences have had a substantial effect on them as individuals. These programs offer, primarily, an international work experience (Toncar & Cudmore, 2000). The opportunity to bridge the gap between theory and practice, the experience of learning by doing, exposure to a corporate culture and work habits, and valuable personal and professional networking contacts are all offered within the international internship environment. Students develop self-confidence by successfully engaging in a foreign culture, where they learn to adjust, adapt, and thrive. The students gain a knowledge of self that is revealing and sometimes painful (Black, Mendenhall, & Oddou, 1991). Students also bring back a wealth of knowledge and experience that causes them to see their world differently. This is evident in the classroom, where these students are often more challenging and demanding.

Faculty and students learn to accept each other as people, and often the bond that develops endures throughout and beyond the student's college career (Toncar & Cudmore, 2000). This affords the student increased access to faculty and often results in long-term friendships built on mutual trust and respect. Participation in an overseas internship experience is a positive reflection on the student. This experience suggests an aggressive, motivated, and committed student who worked hard to set himself or herself apart from peers. Previous researchers suggested that students place high importance on obtaining a meaningful internship experience, primarily to gain a competitive advantage in the job market for lucrative employment (Cannon & Arnold, 1998).

However, according to Cheung and Yue (2013), international college students are under various stresses and at risk for depression and other problems, regardless if they are from America adjusting to a foreign country or foreigners adjusting to America or another foreign country. Particularly, international students face an overload of information but access less social support, notably that from family and professionals (Cemalcilar, Falbo, & Stapleton, 2005; Mori, 2000). Students are also faced with critical issues, such as language differences, dietary differences, differing belief systems about a person's age, gender, and religion, as well as encountering differences in nonverbal communication, currency and foreign exchange rates, concepts of time, interpersonal space and distance, gestures, and physical appearance (Roberts, 1998). The students are therefore vulnerable to various psychosocial risks, even though some are resilient to the stresses.

Colleges are encouraging students to expand their horizons, knowledge and experience by participating in an internship abroad (Gilroy, 2013). Currently, the job market is changing and having a degree is no longer enough. Internships are described as a structured, supervised

professional experience at an approved site, at which students gain experience and earn academic credit. Students are placed in internships based on skills, interests, and professional goals. Gilroy stated that students who take advantage of this opportunity not only boost their employment outlook but also come back profoundly changed. Since it may be their first time outside of the United States, they experience some cultural shock. The experience immerses the students in a culture completely different from the one they might have grown up in and gives them an intensive, hands-on setting with both professional and personal benefits. Many advantages exist to students learning internationally, such as the development of a global mindset through the understanding of how different countries cope with modern challenges, building tolerance and respect for different cultures, and building character through the experience of living with other students.

In their 2012 study, researchers Batey and Lupi examined how study-abroad internship options for college students facilitate their ability to adapt to cross-cultural ambiguity, which can be stressful. The study included 16 undergraduate students who ranged from ages 22 -39 from the University of North Florida interning in Plymouth, England at University College, Plymouth. Of the 16 undergraduates, 13 were females and three were males, of which 12 were White, three were African-American, and one was Hispanic. The Cross-Cultural Adaptability Inventory, was developed by Batey and Lupi, faculty and administrators at the University of North Florida. This inventory measures students' abilities to deal effectively with aspects of the cross-cultural experience, with four scales: (a) emotional resilience, (b) flexibility and openness, (c) perceptual acuity, and (d) personal autonomy; emotional resilience was the largest of the four Cross-Cultural Adaptability Inventory scales. According to the researchers, a lived experience causes



meaningful understandings of culture, as well as one's own place in an interconnected world (Batey & Lupi, 2012).

The researchers found that students had increased academic prestige because of their participation in the international internship and were more likely to be selected for additional opportunities. The students also developed a more critical attitude toward their home country when compared with students who remained at home (Batey & Lupi, 2012). One of the primary outcomes that became apparent from this study was that the University of North Florida faculty team leaders strived to impart knowledge utilization upon the interns, particularly emotional resilience, to affect positive responsiveness to cultural difference within the interns' lives. Essentially, as determined by the researchers, regardless of the brevity of the international experience, perception of cultural acts, or behavior witnessed by the students, what one student perceived as surface culture was experienced as deep culture by another.

Batey and Lupi (2012) expressed that universities are encouraging college students to participate in long-term and short-term international internships, even though long-term internships have more credibility in the workplace. The workplace also expects its expatriates to be able to display perceptual acuity and emotional resilience. Perceptual acuity is the ability to comprehend verbal and nonverbal cues within the context of social relationships. Emotional resilience is the individual's capacity to modulate and to deal effectively with aspects of the cross-cultural experience that may be ambiguous and stressful for them. Chapel (1998) specified that the sponsor, the faculty advisor, and the student should jointly develop the goals for the international internship and state them clearly so that everyone understands individual responsibilities. This joint activity will help avoid later misunderstandings and possible disagreements. Chapel further stated that some degree of culture shock will be experienced as

one's native cultural understanding often conflicts with the host country's values and worldviews. Black, Gregersen, and Mendenhall (1992) gave primary explanations of culture shock. The researchers found that new and unfamiliar environments of foreign cultures disrupt routines and as more routines are disrupted, more time and mental energy is required resulting in a higher level of anger, frustration, and anxiety as well as several other emotional manifestations (Black et al., 1992).

To have successful students in international internships, higher education institutions must have successful faculty and advisors. Chapel (1998) stated that an increasing number of faculty advise graduate students prior to and during internship assignments abroad. To be effective, the advisor needs to understand the cultural dimensions of work and of internships in particular. The faculty advisor is of crucial importance to the success of any internship, particularly in international settings. Three key integrated elements of the internship learning process and outcomes exist: (a) applicable cultural dimensions; (b) selection, training, and monitoring; and (c) internship evaluations.

To be effective, a global business communicator must have international management communication competence, which involves cultural awareness, language knowledge (verbal and nonverbal), and motivation (Chapel, 1998). Randlesome and Myers (1997) asserted that acknowledgment of cultural diversity is a requisite for cultural fluency. International interns, at the least, need to recognize and manage cultural uniqueness. Hofstede (1980) indicated that success depends, in large part, on the intern's willingness to accept responsibility in a more complete discernment than he or she is accustomed to in North America. The intern is usually accustomed to an academic environment that rewards assertiveness and independence in terms of

project interests and completion. Proper advising before the internship commences will help prepare students for both meaningful corporate guidance and direction.

Students need to know and be comfortable with studying and doing business with strangers. In some cultures, nonbusiness matters are discussed until the stranger's character can be appraised. Chapel (1998) asserted that United States or United Kingdom managers are less likely to spend much time getting to know a person first, perhaps not even wanting to know the other person at all. A direct approach is often used, which can be viewed as being rude or overly forward by many Asian business cultures and counterparts. Hofstede (1980) asserted that the predominant socialization pattern in high masculine cultures is assertiveness, which involves such elements as materialism, power, and assertiveness. Low masculine cultures and societies are more nurturing, wherein people, quality of life, and being nurturing are valued. The United States and India are, to a moderate extent, on the high side in the masculinity dimension. Norway and Sweden are on the high scale in the femininity dimension. These factors can affect international interns, as a perceived relationship exists between the degree of masculinity in a country and gender-related career possibilities.

Additionally, Sison and Brennan (2012) listed the primary stress-producing issues related to culture shock that college students studying and working abroad experience. First, the researchers stated that work-integrated learning, such as work-based experiences, can be problematic in a different country. Goals and objectives may not be measurable by the same standards as in the United States. Specifically, differences in quality assurance systems, processes, and outcomes exist between universities and work places in the United States and those in host countries. Additionally, no global credit transfer system exists.

Second, according to Sison and Brennan, in economic issues, many American college students give up paid work in their country to study or work abroad. Depending on the internship program, the students may have to pay extra living costs, and possibly extra tuition fees, as well as give up their salaries while they are gone, especially if the internship is not remunerative. These students are unlikely to get equivalent work in their host country because of language difficulties. Combined with the actual costs of airfares, the situation potentially becomes economically stressful (Barron, Baum, & Conway, 2007). Third, an important benefit of student mobility is the establishment and development of social networks (Sison & Brennan, 2012).

Mobility among doctoral students contributes to network building, which in turn promotes collaboration (Bienkowska & Klofsten, 2012). Therefore, graduate student mobility can significantly shape the future careers of these students (Furukawa, Shirakawa, & Okuwada, 2013). While these become exceptionally invaluable for those studying business, benefits exist for other disciplines as well. In this connection, language can remain a barrier for students. The outcome of this can be seen in that many mobile students travel abroad to English speaking countries (McBride, 2011). Last, the political motivations for student mobility also sometimes differ between host and home country (Sison & Brennan, 2012). These inequities can limit the efforts put in student mobility programs from a governance and administration infrastructure perspective.

To explore how employees perceived their workplaces' efforts to address stress management across demographic differences, Buys, Matthews, and Randall (2010) studied 85 individuals at an international disability management conference, where the participants completed a stress management workplace questionnaire. The researchers revealed that the findings of the survey indicated that employees were not positive about their workplace's efforts

to manage stress in either prevention or rehabilitation activities (Buys, Matthews, & Randall, 2010). Employees from smaller organizations rated their environments more positively than larger organizations.

Before Buys et al.'s (2010) and Matthews et al.'s (2010) assertions, Brown (2008) attempted to broaden the scope of literature on stress within the workplace by examining a public sample of expatriate couples living in London, thus addressing a gap that the aforementioned researchers would later fill. Collaborating with Focus Information Services, Brown received 152 responses out of 1,600 surveys, a mere 9.5% response rate. Brown built the study from previous studies of expatriate stress by identifying and confirming specific stressors that expatriates experience while on assignment. Factor analysis is a statistical method that involves taking a large amount of data and condensing it to a smaller amount of data. This analysis uncovered hidden patterns, revealing that specific sources of stress were loaded onto four dominant stressors, and spouses were more stressed by the dominant stressors of reduced self, local pressures, and isolation. Employees themselves were more stressed by relationship strains. Factor analysis is also used "to explore the possible underlying structure in a set of interrelated elements without imposing any preconceived structure on the outcome" (Child, 2006, p. 6).

Globalization is increasing the demand for expatriates, but evidence of resistance to international assignments exists because of career, family, and stress concerns (Brown, 2008). Assignments increase stress on family members, and while its existence is well established, much less is known about the sources of that stress. Moreover, families are unlikely to know about the dominant stressors that cause the stress, therefore many people make important family decisions with insufficient information. Brown's (2008) study contributed to informed decision-making by expatriate candidates through identifying the dominant stressors on assignment, and

how this stress might be reduced. However, expatriate stress needs to be understood in the overall context of globalization and the economics factors driving it. Work stress is on the increase in most developed economies (Jones, Huxtable, Hodgson, & Price, 2003; Peterson & Wilson, 2004), partly because of increased market competition, and partly because of the changes globalization is bringing to employment. College graduates will face these same issues when they become expatriates in the workplace (Toncar & Cudmore, 2000). Contemporary employment patterns are changing as work is increasingly being outsourced from large companies to more specialized organizations in the marketplace (Wolf, 2004). Work is not only being outsourced, it is also being moved off-shore, shifting many service activities, such as call-centers, from developed economies to developing nations, such as India and the Philippines (Friedman, 2005).

Adjustment is frequently accompanied by stress (Foster, 1997; Jordan & Cartwright, 1998) and the critical influence of the spouse draws attention as to whether the employee and spouse have the same stress experience on assignment. Adjustment involves managing change, new experiences, and new challenges, all of which are likely to have mental health consequences. The coping literature provides an understanding of stress on expatriates. Lazarus and Folkman (1984), for example, identified life changes as a potential source of stress, which they appraised as life threatening or challenging. However, research provides limited guidance regarding what companies can do to reduce this stress, since studies confirming its prevalence seldom shed light on its sources (Brown, 2008).

Another specific stressor, reduced self, consisted of uncertainty about the future after the assignment (Brown, 2008). Since repatriation continues to be a major challenge (Black et al., 1992; Feldman & Thompson, 1993), this is an important finding for companies because this

uncertainty can be contributing to expatriate stress. The stress of too many conflicting demands is consistent with one study, showing burnout as the third biggest challenge for expatriates (Cendant Mobility, 2004).

Abramovich, Schreier, and Koren (2000) asserted that medical students studying abroad face the double stress of adjusting to a new cultural environment as well as coping with the stresses of medical school. Abramovich et al. examined 71 first-year medical students at the NY/American Program, Sackler School of Medicine, at Tel Aviv University in Israel. The methods used within the study included the use of two instruments developed and validated at the University of Washington, Seattle: (a) the ways of coping checklist (WCCL) and the appraisal dimension scale (ADS), which are components of a self-report measure with Likert response options. The researchers found that students' coping with their adjustment to Israel highly correlated to their adjustment to medical school. Improvements in student social support were implemented because of the study. Student mental health showed significant improvement and a corresponding reduction in dysfunctional defense mechanisms occurred such as a previous pattern of heavy drinking.

Abramovich et al.'s (2000) study was relevant because it displayed the behavior the students exhibited initially, which was like the behavior expatriates' display when unable to complete their international assignments. The results supported the view that students who have a negative psychological impact of adaptation to their new cultural surroundings also have difficulty at medical school. This is a downward spiral, in which anxiety and depression impair cognitive performance, which leads to academic difficulties and emotional distress. However, many aspects exist concerning medical students that the researchers were not able to investigate

or appropriately compare, such as differences between Hebrew and Non-Hebrew speakers or degree of illicit drug use (Abramovich et al., 2000).

According to Limm et al. (2011), and rooted in the findings of Abramovich et al. (2000), occupational stress is considered a large risk factor for a wide range of health issues. This stress is also linked to staff turnover, absenteeism, poor morale, and reduced performance. This proves that a need exists for primary prevention strategies to reduce job stress and its negative effect on health. Specifically, using the advantage of a work setting approach, stress management interventions in the workplace have received increased attention from human resources offices and researchers.

As such, the researchers examined the long-term effects of a stress management intervention on psychological and biological reactions to work stress (Limm et al., 2011). Limm et al. (2011) selected 174 lower or middle management employees (99%, male) and randomly assigned them to an intervention or a waiting control group. The program comprised 24 45-minute group sessions (full 2 days followed by four 45-minute sessions within the following 8 months) on individual work stress situations (Limm et al., 2011). The primary endpoint was perceived stress reactivity (Stress Reactivity Scale), while peripheral endpoints were salivary cortisol and  $\alpha$ -amylase, anxiety and depression, and effort-reward imbalance (ERI; Limm et al., 2011). No difference was observed for cortisol; for depression, anxiety, and ERI, improvements were higher in the stress management intervention group but did not reach statistical significance (Limm et al., 2011). Stress management intervention based on work stress theory was effective in reducing perceived exertion and sympathetic activation (fight or flight response) in lower and middle management employees (Limm et al., 2011). Other mental health characteristics and ERI showed a tendency towards improvement. The beneficial effects were present one year later.



The findings of Limm et al.'s (2011) study were significant because they were in line with previous research regarding expatriates and stress management. Limm et al.'s findings were like those of Black and Mendenhall (2001), for instance, who found that approximately 40% of all expatriate managers, mostly Americans, returned prematurely from their overseas assignments because of failure to manage the stress that occurs in the cross-cultural adjustment, which results in poor job performance. Many expatriated students were also prepared to deal with the cultural and personal adjustments, but were not alerted to the incidence of expatriate tension (Brown, 2008). Limm et al. (2011) posited that information is also needed to formulate stress management programs for college students in internationalization programs so that they can avoid ineffective coping and stress-related illnesses while maintaining good mental and physical health as they work abroad. Stress management is vital to their potential future employment overseas, as stress in a foreign assignment can take on debilitating forms, such as:

1. Absenteeism;
2. Alcohol and drug abuse;
3. Addictive behaviors, such as gambling;
4. Inappropriate sexual behaviors;
5. High employee turnover for companies;
6. Premature return to the country of origin;
7. Hostility toward others inside and outside the organization;
8. Extended leaves; or
9. Combinations of the above (Abramovich et al., 2000; Darby, 1998; Kemmerer, 2008; Limm et al., 2011; McIntosh, 1998).

Prince, DeRomaña, Holvey-Bowles, and Hopkins (2006) recommended that overseas and U.S. education abroad professionals need to be knowledgeable, or become knowledgeable, about available counseling services to students abroad and learn how students can access those services. The more specific the staff can be in describing these services to students, the more likely students will be to trust the referrals. In addition, it is helpful if the education abroad professionals know and can recommend local therapists based on the students' needs. Prince et al. also recommended that if no English-speaking counselors, or any counselors at all, are available in the host country, students should consider remote counseling options (e.g., counseling via the telephone or fellow students who may have peer-counseling training). If the concern is deemed an emergency or the student seems unsure or anxious, the student leader should escort the student to the counseling appointment or advise the overseas staff to do so. Additionally, a wide variety of therapeutic treatment strategies are designed to create a corrective experience (Bea & Deleon, 2004).

Myers-Walls, Frias, Kwon, Ko, and Lu (2011) investigated acculturative stress, looking at Asian international graduate students and their spouses rather than expatriates. Myers-Walls et al. conducted a qualitative study on 31 students from China, Korea, the Philippines, and Taiwan to determine the stressors the students encountered. Stressors were identified in the answers of the group: (a) adjustment to a new culture, (b) feeling overwhelmed, (c) language difficulty, (d) feelings of isolation, (e) financial stress, and (f) marital stress (Myers-Walls, Frias, Kwon, Ko, & Lu, 2011). Stressors found only in the answers of the students were: (a) balancing multiple roles, (b) adjusting to the academic culture, (c) finding child care, and among male students d) worrying about the nonstudent spouse (Myers-Walls et al., 2011). Stressors unique to nonstudent

spouses included: (a) loss of roles and status, (b) power imbalance in the couple relationships, and (c) feeling inadequate (Myers-Walls et al., 2011). The stressors reported by the students and their families are like those reported in this researcher's research involving undergraduate students and American students in study abroad and international internship programs, especially culture shock and academic shock.

For minorities in the United States, affirming and retaining a healthy identity and psychological well-being remains a constant stressor in the face of persistent discrimination (Iwamoto & Liu, 2010). The American Council on Education (2000) stated that students of color, low-income, first-generation college students, and female students in male-dominated majors are all underrepresented abroad. According to Rubin and Matthews (2013), underrepresented college students are unaware of the benefits of international programs in the workplace or in post-secondary schools as well as how to finance participation in them. Conversely, Toncar and Cudmore (2000) stated that some underrepresented populations of students recognize the value of international internships that give them the opportunity to live and work in a foreign country. The researchers also stated that these students understand the benefits of the programs to its many stakeholders, including future employers.

Researchers have suggested that underrepresented populations of students who do participate in international internships are all more likely to participate in short-term programs (Shank & Gillis, 2011). Educators and the workplace favor semester or long-term programs, arguing that long-term participation has the highest effect on students' understanding and comfort with other cultures. The longer programs also enhance students' employability in the 21st century workplace (Rubin & Matthews, 2013).

The American Council on Education (2000) discovered that African-American, Native American, Hispanic, Asian, and low-income Caucasian students say their primary reasons for not planning to participate in international internship programs are lack of familiarity with the foreign language, worries about the cost, stress concerns involving the duties to be executed, and anxiety about security or acts of terrorism and recent events in the world. According to Sanders (2000), one issue in student participation in internationalization programs where no attempts have been made to rectify is discrimination overseas.

Attitudes toward women and minority groups vary among countries and cultures. Even if students are not in the minority at home, they may be in the host country of the international internship (Eschbach, Parker, & Stoeberl, 2001). Reports from female students and students of diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds are varied, from those feeling invigorated by the freedom from the American environment of race and gender relations to differing degrees of curiosity or hostility about their ethnicity (National Association of International Educators, 2005).

Females of color may be stereotyped as prostitutes, nannies, or domestic workers (Bunch, 2004; Muhs, Niemann, González & Harris, 2012). All ethnicities of American women may be stereotyped as being “easy” sexually (Conley, 2013). Female students may also incur discrimination if they are studying or working in male-dominated academic subject areas (Miles, Hu, & Dotson, 2013). There have been reports of African-American males being stopped by officials for no apparent reason (Dessoff, 2006). Physically challenged students might experience rudeness, particularly the handicapped (Haller, 2006) or the overweight (Weisberger, 2013). Students may also have to deal with the possibility of outright racism or sexism abroad or the possibility of insensitive attitudes, depending on the country in which their program takes place (Simon & Ainsworth, 2012).

Sanders (2000) further stated that American students need to be informed about the possibility of being discriminated against outside of the United States. However, they should not be discouraged about studying or working abroad. Students should be encouraged to remain positive and reap the benefits of the education overseas and the opportunities that this participation will bring (González, 2015). Discrimination of all forms is not exclusive to the United States alone but are global issues affecting countries throughout the world. Like Sanders' studies, Chieffo and Griffiths (2004) did a quantitative study at the University of Delaware by examining the determinants of student participation in internationalization programs. The researchers found that the determining factors of participation of all students were the following: (a) financial, (b) personal, (c) academic, (d) social, and (e) institutional. Chieffo and Griffiths' survey showed that students obtain the largest amount of internationalization program information from their friends and classmates. Parental influence, both general and financial, was also important; however, this study revealed an unusual lack of influence from faculty.

Efforts of post-secondary education to diversify the professoriate have primarily taken the form of increasing the numbers of women and faculty of color. College students of color and females will have the opportunity to view faculty of color and female faculty as role models in positions of power and authority like those held by nonminority and male faculty and staff, as opposed to the historical role of people of color and females employed in higher education in positions of deference or subservience. For example, while the employment of African-Americans in predominately-white institutions is not new, they have primarily served in secretarial-clerical and menial laborer positions (Vander Puten, 2009).

Underrepresented faculty will be instrumental in influencing and assisting underrepresented student populations with taking advantage of college programs, such as

internationalization programs, where these faculty are severely underrepresented. Many majority students who participate in these programs first hear about the opportunity from a faculty member. Faculty plays an important role in encouraging students to study abroad and to participate in internationalization programs. Faculty are also able to influence many students. If a college or university wants to increase the numbers of students who study abroad and participate in global internships, especially underrepresented students, faculty should be part of the process of recruiting students for these programs and making the changes in the demographics of the students who participate (Lu, 2016). Morris (2016) also stated that post-secondary academic leaders have a clear understanding of who has the authority or responsibility for decision-making and respects the roles of various groups and constituents (faculty, staff, students, alumni, legislators, etc.) in the process. College leaders should know with whom to consult, formally and informally, and when to bring about change.

Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) majors are also underrepresented in study abroad and international internships. Study abroad and international internship professionals need to approach STEM faculty, discuss the importance of these programs, and emphasize the significance of faculty support in encouraging students to go abroad. This same approach can be used to encourage ethnic minority students and female students pursuing male-dominated majors, who also have low internationalization participation rates, particularly in STEM related programs (Vander Putten, 2009). Underrepresented students relate culturally to underrepresented faculty members, so they play an even more significant role in persuading these students to study abroad or to pursue international internships, thereby assisting these students with positioning themselves for lucrative employment upon graduation. Therefore, researchers have shown how important it is to recruit and retain a diverse faculty (Lewis, 2012).

George (2013) also indicated that employees are expected to have high levels of emotional intelligence and self-awareness to unite people from different cultures.

One of the major factors of stress affecting international students is their racial identity within the United States. Racial identity theory describes the process of how members of racially oppressed groups respond to and internalize race-related stress and prejudicial treatment into their overall identity or self-consciousness (Alvarez & Helms, 2001). Within the Asian community, the daily and lifelong experiences of racism and discrimination have a deleterious effect on the well-being of Asians and Asian Americans (Lee, 2003; Mossakowski, 2003; Wong & Halgin, 2006). Racism may overwhelm the available coping responses and resources for Asian Americans, which may lead to psychological distress (Harrell, 2000; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). In explaining the ways in which Asians understand and cope with racism, authors have used various methodology and theories. Racial identity (Alvarez, Juang, & Liang, 2006; Liu, 2006), ethnic identity (Lee, 2003; Noh, Beiser, Kaspar, Hou, & Rummens, 1999), cultural values (Liu & Iwamoto, 2006), and self-esteem (Liang & Fassinger, 2008) are found in the existing empirical literature.

Iwamoto and Liu (2010) investigated the direct effects of racial identity, ethnic identity, Asian values, and race-related stress on the positive psychological well-being of 402 Asian American and Asian international college students. The authors hypothesized that race-related stress, racial identity, ethnic identity and Asian values are positively associated with eudemonic well-being (Iwamoto & Liu, 2010). Iwamoto and Liu used the racial identity theory, which describes how individuals respond to and internalize racism (Helms, 2007), and predicted that participants' adherence to the various racial identity attitudes would influence their well-being.

Iwamoto and Liu (2010) recruited the students from a large, public southern California university. Specifically, after instructors' approvals, students were recruited via e-mail from various classes in English, math, engineering, psychology, biology, business, political sciences, and more. The researchers also contacted student organizations from the university. Finally, additional students were recruited from several Asian American Listservs and blogs. Participants filled out an online questionnaire that took between 20 and 40 minutes to complete. At the end of it, participants had the option to enter a raffle to win \$50 gift certificates. Additionally, the researcher analyzed and treated the date, time, and origin of submissions accordingly to ensure that potential duplicate responses were eliminated.

Together, the recurring issues of the relationships were consistent with previous researchers who examined racial identity and ethnic identity on well-being (Iwamoto & Liu, 2010). Higher internalization and ethnic identity affirmation and belonging scores were positively related to the Scale of Psychological Well-Being (SPWB), which measures self-acceptance, positive relations with others, environmental mastery, and personal growth. Racial identity attitudes that focused primarily on racism, such as dissonance and immersion-emersion, were negatively associated. Asian values were inversely associated with SPWB, and no direct relationship existed between race-related stress and SPWB. Iwamoto and Liu (2010) demonstrated that Asian values, conformity, and dissonance were moderators of the association between race-related stress and well-being. Generally, the three interactions appeared to follow the same pattern in which the largest differences occurred in low race-related stress. As race-related stress increased, the student's well-being was based on displaying a low score on the Asian Values Scale, high conformity, and low dissonance was reduced. As expected, internationalization attitudes were a robust predictor of SPWB. One explanation could be that



students who endorsed positive internalization status may have developed more cognitive resources and may use active coping strategies that help foster well-being (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012). To this end, individuals who feel secure and have internalized positive beliefs about their racial group and are conscious about the effects of racism have higher levels of eudemonic well-being. In addition, individuals who endorse internalization ideology might be more self-actualized, meaning they accept past struggles in their lives, which might even include their past racial identity conflicts.

### **2.3.2. Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction**

Contemporary business leaders need to know how culture and society influence business functions if they want to remain competent in the realm of international business. As such, the development of this skill is often marred by culture shock. To thoroughly cope and deal with culture shock, students involved in internationalization programs must demonstrate resilience, adaptability, and the effort to hone or develop coping strategies to adjust to the world around them (Zhou, Jindal-Snape, Topping, & Todman, 2008).

To help develop these key skills of adjusting within a foreign environment, individuals have turned to mindfulness. The notion of mindfulness, or the ability to use reflection as a connection between knowledge and action is a concept that provides a holistic conceptualization of intercultural competence. Mindfulness originally stemmed from Eastern spiritual traditions of meditation, which prompt a person to consciously observe and change one's mental habits. In doing so, an individual is conscious of his or her mental, emotional, and physical states and can connect with internal thoughts because of external catalysts (Kabat-Zinn, 2003). Once this has been achieved, an individual can focus on the current moment and exercise awareness of notions that provide new outlooks on life (Baer, Hopkins, Krietemeyer, Smith, & Toney, 2006;

Chomsky, 1965; Hanh, 1975). Additionally, mindfulness has to do with qualities of attention and awareness that can be cultivated and developed through meditation (Helber, Zook, & Immergut, 2012; Kabat-Zinn, 2003). Historically, mindfulness has been called *the heart* of Buddhist meditation (Thera, 1962).

The intention in developing MBSR in 1979 and offering it through an outpatient stress reduction clinic at the University of Massachusetts Medical Center was twofold. The first was that MBSR was to be used as a training vehicle for the relief of stress (Dunn, 2016a) and suffering and, the second MBSR was to be used as a model. If the experience was successful in terms of acceptability of the process to the participants and in terms of attaining measurable outcomes of stress reduction, the program might serve as a model for other hospitals and medical centers, which has proven to be the case. Mindfulness based stress reduction can be adaptable to other contexts in which stress was one of the primary concerns (Kabat-Zinn, 2003). Dr. Kabat-Zinn hoped that by starting a stress clinic based on intensive training in mindfulness meditation he could document how these practices might have a profound effect on the health and well-being of individuals. The larger purpose was to affect a kind of public-health intervention. Kabat-Zinn discovered many positive effects of mindfulness meditation on stress in the body, on the immune system, on aging, and among many others health issues. A correspondingly strong interest has occurred regarding how resiliency can be developed in the face of stress, which is a benefit of the mindfulness practice (Kabat-Zinn, 2014).

Stress and its management are primary concerns of expatriates in multinational corporations and are concerns for college students in internationalization programs. Researchers studying MBSR suggested that this practice has a powerful ability to calm the mind, facilitate focus, memory, concentration, and reduce stress (Kabat-Zinn, 1997), which may be

compromised, as mentioned previously. This practice can also increase immune system functioning and restore the body's nervous system say (Hamilton, Kitzman, & Guyotte, 2006).

Hall (1999) developed a meditation group consisting of 18 students (8 males, 10 females; mean age 20.37) enrolled in a psychology course in which the students would undergo training in meditation. The control group consisted of 13 students (3 males, 10 females; mean age 21.67) recruited from an upper-level cognitive psychology class (Hall, 1999). The amount of meditation time the meditation group spent averaged 85 minutes a week. Prior to the class, there was no difference in GPA; upon the end of the semester, however, the meditation group had a higher GPA (Hall, 1999).

In an extension of Hall's findings, Brook (2013) indicated that MBSR had modest, mixed, or no consistent evidence demonstrating their efficacy. However, building on initial research, Creswell (2016) stated that mindfulness meditation may increase default mode network, which is a network wherein certain brain regions interact with one another and is at its most active when the brain is resting but alert. Creswell and his colleagues gathered 35 stressed job-seeking adults, split them into two groups—either a 3-day intensive residential mindfulness meditation or relaxation training program. These findings provided evidence that mindfulness meditation training pairs default mode network with a region known to be important in top-down executive control at rest, the pre-frontal cortex. This is associated with improvements in a marker of inflammatory disease risk (Creswell, 2016).

Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction has the potential to be a solution to the stress management needed to overcome the experiences of culture shock, discrimination, and repatriation in internationalization programs (Dunn, 2016b). In terms of global stressors, the most stressful challenge employees and students face in work and study abroad is culture shock

(Baer, 2003). One reason why people experience culture shock is that they feel overwhelmed by all the new things in the host environment (University of Maryland, 2013). Parfenova (2013) defined culture shock as:

Emotional disorientation characterized by feelings of shock and anxiety. It occurs when people are placed in a foreign environment far away from their hometown, family, and friends. Most people experience a degree of homesickness and distress at the start of their travels. Being exposed to a different language, sights, smells, people, and an entirely new culture can be both an exhilarating and an overwhelming experience (p. 2).

If students remain in conflict over these issues, they may experience depression, social problems, or even academic problems because of chronic stress. Researches have linked stress from culture shock and discrimination to poor health, doctor's visits, and issues regarding mental focus, memory, and concentration (Ryan & Twibell, 2000).

Working through culture shock and discrimination will usually result in stronger, more interculturally competent students (Roth & Robbins, 2004). The students will be capable of resolving the daily vicissitudes or changing circumstances regarding the stresses of living in their host country and culture. According to Rubin and Matthews (2013), any international education program, and especially those focused on service to host nation communities, is not for the faint of heart.

To test this notion of mindfulness and its critical link between knowledge and behavior, Tuleja (2014) examined the cultural competence of a group of 71 Masters of Business Administration students before and after a cross-cultural immersion experience in China to determine if students retained cultural information regarding why people do what they do. Tuleja specifically focused on mindfulness within two essays—one written before the experience, and one after. Tuleja posed the question,

In what ways does student writing reflect their deepening intercultural understanding (the ability to make connections between cultural practices and business practices based upon their personal experiences) as a result of their pre-departure learning, their in-country experience, and their post immersion reflection assignment? (p. 12).

Per Tuleja, many of the themes of student papers dealt with language learning, the emerging economy, and governmental influences. When the two writings were compared, an increase of about 26% occurred in students' comprehension and understanding. Overall, most of the students showed moderate to strong understanding regarding the important concepts of Chinese history, politics, social issues, and cultural practices. The evidence confirmed that most students understood culture as an influence on business practices: societal, political, historical, and cultural (Tuleja, 2014).

Before Tuleja's (2014) study, Shapiro, Astin, Bishop, and Cordova (2005) examined that stress inherent in health care negatively affected health care professionals, leading to deleterious consequences, such as increased depression, decreased job satisfaction, and psychological distress. This study's primary purpose was to demonstrate the value of MBSR for medical students and pre-health students actively engaged in clinical practice (Shapiro, Astin, Bishop, & Cordova, 2005). To address these issues, Shapiro et al. examined the effects of a short-term stress management program, MBSR, on health care professionals. The program's intention was to reduce stress, decrease burnout, and increase overall well-being. Shapiro et al. focused on 18 medical students and pre-health students and involved a randomized controlled study design, yielding a between-groups comparison condition. The students were randomly assigned to an 8-week MBSR group or a wait-list control group. To further assess the subjective experiences of participants, the researchers administered the following two questions at the end of the intervention:

1. On a scale from 1–10, how meaningful has the MBSR program been in your life?

2. What do you feel you gained from the MBSR program? (Shapiro et al., 2005, p. 168).

Shapiro et al. suggested that a meditation-based intervention for health care professionals has benefits. Participants who benefited from the MBSR intervention experienced less stress, distress, dissatisfactions, and burnout, while experiencing more self-compassion.

Like Shapiro et al. (2005), Song, Lindquist, and Choi (2010) asserted MBSR programs have been shown to reduce stress and improve health-related quality of life. As such, the researchers set out to describe the effects of MBSR on stress and health-related quality of life so that the potential benefits of the intervention could be evaluated for wider application in Korea. The authors found that MBSR groups had significantly reduced stress outcomes relative to non-MBSR groups. Mindfulness based stress reduction programs were effective in decreasing stress and increased the health-related quality of life in an overwhelming amount of the studies. Nyklíček and Kuijpers (2008) asserted that because of the success of MBSR programs in stress reduction, the programs should be applied to preparing college students for the international work environment.

Baer, Carmody, and Hunsinger (2012) furthered Song et al.'s (2010) study by focusing on the weekly changes in self-reported mindfulness and perceived stress in participants who completed an 8-week course in MBSR. Many study participants became involved in MBSR in an academic medical center. Weekly self-report assessments of mindfulness skills and perceived stress were completed by the participants. In the study, 87 adult participants had problematic levels of stress related to chronic illness, chronic pain, and other life circumstances (Baer, Carmody, & Hunsinger, 2012). Their average age was 49 years, 67% were female and 37% were

male. The researchers hypothesized that significant improvement in mindfulness skills would precede significant change in stress (Baer et al., 2012).

There was a significant change in mindfulness skills and perceived stress from pretreatment to posttreatment. This was especially true by the second week of the program, whereas significant improvements in perceived stress did not occur until week four (Baer et al., 2012). The extent of change in mindfulness skills during the first 3 weeks predicted change in perceived stress during the intervention. Within the context of the proposed study, Baer et al.'s (2012) findings are beneficial as they reflect the stressful adjustments college students and expatriates must make overseas, which can affect their mental health. For students to complete their internationalization program and expatriates to complete their international assignments, stress must be effectively managed.

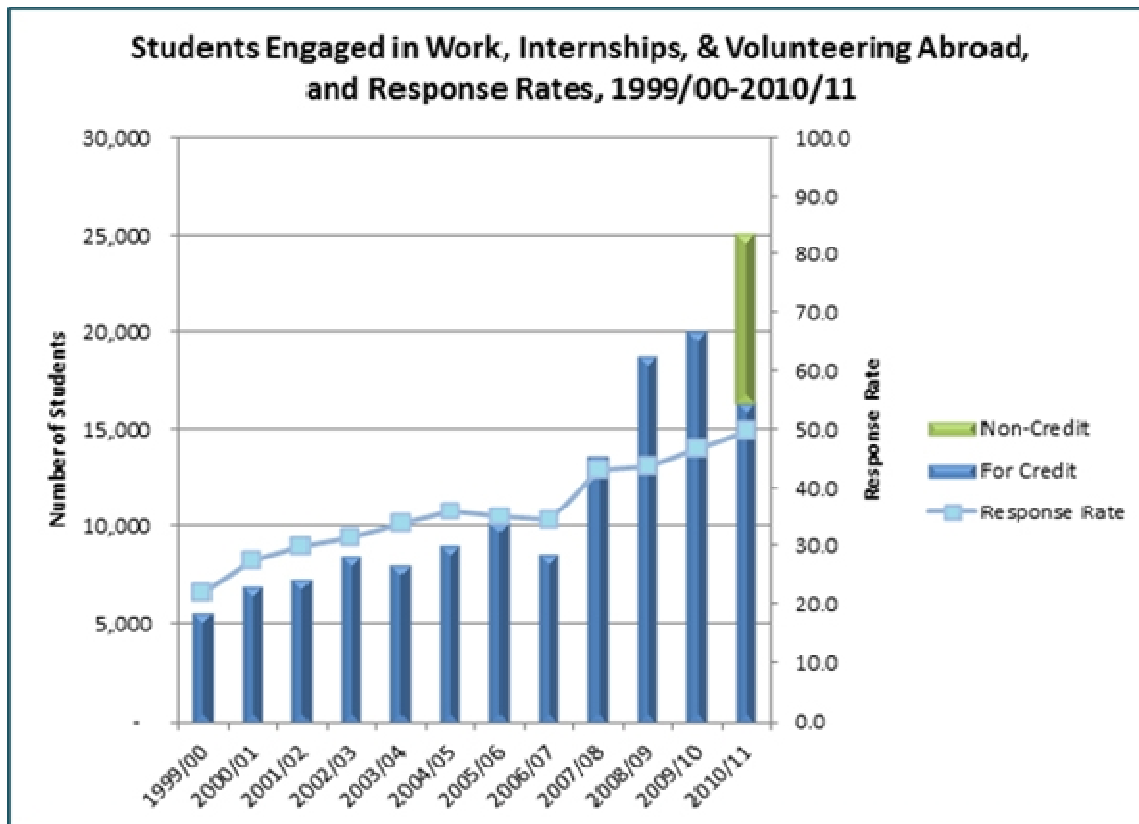
### **2.3.3. Study Abroad**

Study abroad directly benefits several populations of people: the students, the host country coordinators, the home stay families, the host placement or internship agencies, and the post-secondary institutions (Kanani, 2000). With the growing interdependence of nations, it is imperative that one becomes knowledgeable about the world beyond the borders of one's own country and gains skills in communicating with other cultures. Study abroad is most beneficial to the participants who study in such fields as foreign languages, area studies, international or intercultural communications, the environment, journalism, and social welfare, among others. For students, study abroad is a life-changing experience. In addition to gaining valuable university credit, the knowledge and perspectives they acquire as well as the values they develop through their grassroots field placement experiences will profoundly affect the way they live the rest of their lives. The experience can be an enriching addition to their professional curriculum

vitae. The host country coordinators gain financially, and opportunities exist for gainful employment for a host of other supporting staff. Home stay families are directly and usually in contact with the students and a mutually beneficial friendship develops that bonds the participant, the host families, and the home families, thereby creating a global bond. This is a bond that is essential, even in a small way, to the ongoing globalization process (Kanani, 2000).

The Institute of International Education's (2014) collected data showed a sharp increase in the reported numbers of students engaged in work, internships, and volunteering abroad from 2007–2008 through 2010–2011 (see Figure 5). In 1999–2000, only 5,584 students engaged in these activities abroad (Institute of International Education, 2014). By 2006–2007, that number grew to 8,584. The number almost tripled by the 2010–2011 academic year to reach a total of 25,080 students engaged in work, internships, and volunteering abroad for-credit and noncredit in 2010–2011 (Institute of International Education, 2014).





*Figure 5.* Numbers of Students Engaged in Work, Internships & Volunteering Abroad, and Response Rates, 1999/00–2000/11. Adapted from the Institute of International Education, 2014.

The Institute of International Education (2014) has been collecting data on U.S. students' work, internships, and volunteer experiences abroad since 2000 through its survey of 1,700 U.S. colleges and universities. The survey first included a questionnaire on internships and work abroad for academic credit in the 1999–2000 survey. It received a response rate of 22% in that first year. In 2010–2011, an additional question on noncredit activities abroad was added (Institute of International Education, 2014). That questionnaire received a response of 21%. The response rate for the work, internships, and volunteering abroad questionnaire eventually reached a combined response rate of 50% for the for-credit and noncredit questions in the 2010–2011 survey (Institute of International Education, 2014). Figure 5, from the Institute of International Education (2014), also illustrates the growing numbers of college students going abroad. The

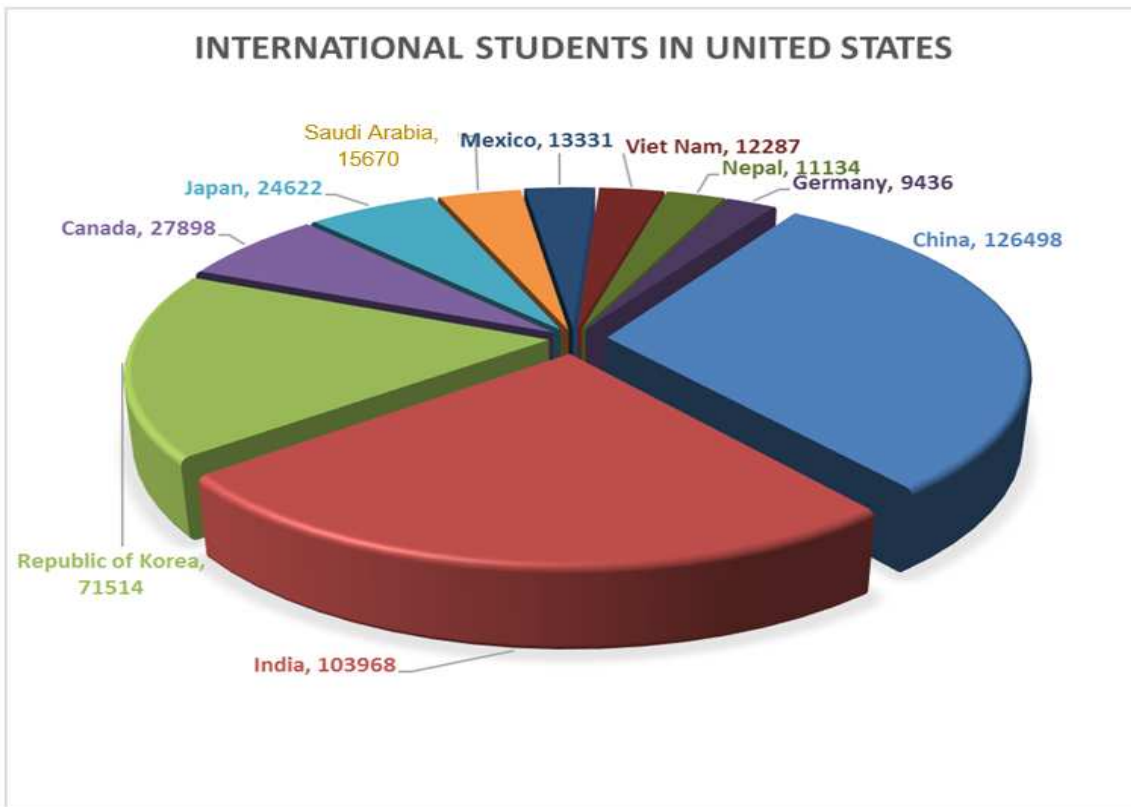
green section denotes the numbers of students who volunteer abroad and for which no monetary remuneration or college credit is given.

The American Council on Education (2000) and Fischer (2012) reiterated that post-secondary education institutions use study abroad and international internship programs as one of the avenues to address the mentioned expatriate issues. Although data show a sharp increase in the reported number of American students engaged in these programs, the numbers represent only 1.5% of American students enrolled in higher education that are working and studying abroad. Many organizations ask why most international assignments end in failure. This question addresses organizational anticipatory factors related to the effectiveness of the expatriates (Emmanuel et al., 2010). Collins and Davidson (2002) wrote that by the time American students graduate, less than 3% experienced study or internships outside the United States.

College students participate in these programs in much greater numbers in other countries according to the Institute of International Education (2014). China sent 23% more students to work and study abroad in 2011 than in 2010, having risen to 28.7% in 2015. The fastest growing region this year was the Middle East and North Africa, with an increase of 20% of students enrolled in U.S. higher education internships. Students from different nationalities find the United States an ideal destination to pursue their tertiary education. Each year the numbers of international students sent to the United States for study abroad or international internships increases.

Figure 6 shows that the largest numbers of students coming to the United States are from China and India. Per the latest data, at least 3.6 million college students in 2010 were enrolled in internationalization programs worldwide, up from 2 million in 2000. East Asia and the Pacific are the largest sources of international students participating in these programs in the United

States, representing 28% of the global total, while China accounts for 17%. The United States, Australia, and Japan are students' main destinations for study (Institute of International Education, 2014).



*Figure 6.* Numbers of International Students in the United States. Adapted from Institute of International Education, Open Door Report, 2014.

Additionally, growing numbers of students from these nations are choosing to partake in international internships rather than study abroad programs for increased competitiveness in the global job market or for selection to graduate school. Of the 1.5% of American college students working and studying abroad, 80% are Caucasian and from affluent, highly educated, and professional families. Many of these students have already participated frequently in overseas travel and international experiences. Of that number, more than half of these students do not

receive any form of financial aid. The University of Iowa researchers indicated that student recipients of financial aid are 11% less likely to go abroad than their peers and see these programs as a luxury (Walker, Bukenya, & Thomas, 2011). Olsen and Rosenfeld (1984) have indicated that these students may have parents who do not know about financial aid and college programs, and may learn about the programs through less reliable sources. They are not able to maneuver through the many complex applications, and are less willing to go into debt for their child's participation. Olsen and Rosenfeld further specify that family background plays at least some part in the choice among colleges and college programs, given the intention to go at all. Further, tuition costs vary tremendously by the type of institution. Costs may be a barrier to going to a particular school or a barrier to participate in college programs that may require financial assistance.

The American Council on Education (2000) stated that students of color, low-income, first-generation college students, and female students in male-dominated majors are all underrepresented abroad. According to Rubin and Matthews (2013), underrepresented college students are unaware of the benefits of internationalization programs in the workplace or in post-secondary schools as well as how to finance participation in the programs. Conversely, Toncar and Cudmore (2000) stated that some underrepresented populations of students are cognizant of the value of internationalization programs that give them the opportunity to live, study, and work in a foreign country. These students also understand the benefits of the programs to its many stakeholders, including future employers, but lack the resources to become participants.

Researchers have suggested that underrepresented populations of students who do participate in internationalization programs are more likely to participate in short-term programs. Educators and the workplace favor semester or long-term programs because of the benefits

provided by immersion namely, enhanced employability, more time to develop comfort with other cultures and a higher chance of expatriate success (Rubin & Matthews, 2013).

Savicki (2010) reported on the relationship between sociocultural and psychological adaptations and how it affects the outcomes of study abroad programs. Sociocultural adjustment was measured on the first week, middle week, and at the end of the students' study abroad experience, using instruments, such as the Sociocultural Adaptation Scale, the Brief Symptom Inventory, and the Intercultural Potential Scale (Savicki, 2010). Students' cultural adaptation can be seen as both psychological (coping with acculturative stress), and sociocultural (learning what it takes to fit in to the new culture). Ostensibly, these two types of adaptations support one another, with certain caveats. The students rated their difficulty in adjusting to cultural situations using a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (*No difficulty*) to 5 (*Extreme difficulty*; Savicki, 2010). No differences appeared between the groups on any of the intercultural adjustment potential scales. Predicting which students would fall into the low or high initial adapter groups was not based on personality or potential for intercultural adjustment (Savicki, 2010). A repeated measures analysis of variance indicated that the high and low initial adapter groups showed significant differences in sociocultural adjustment during the three time periods in which they were assessed. Savicki found that some stressors were important to study abroad students throughout their sojourn (e.g., complying with the rules of social interaction); while others, on average, hardly registered to students as stressful at any time during their stay (e.g., finding food to enjoy). In addition, the importance of various sociocultural stressors differed during the sojourn. Early on, concerns about making one's self understood dominated; while later, issues emerged regarding using the host culture language, and comparing the United States and host culture to other cultures encountered during travels (Tait, 1996).

What was noteworthy with this study were Savicki's (2010) findings on acculturative stress. When students are dropped into a foreign culture to study and live for an extended period, they face a confusion of cultural clashes, as well as the excitement and challenge of engaging with a foreign world (Matsumoto et al., 2001). From the classic stress and coping point of view (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), students' coping resources are taxed in dealing with such daily stressors as riding public transportation, standing in line, and making purchases in local stores. The expectations students carry from their home cultures do not necessarily apply in the host culture. From the sociocultural perspective, the students are faced with the task of learning a new set of skills and, sometimes more difficult, altering well-practiced skills at fitting into a culture based on their previous experience (Biggs, Lebow, Smith, Harper, Patten, Sim, & Kumar, S., 2014). Depending on their personality and their coping skills, students may experience the new learning situations as exhilarating and challenging, or threatening and even harmful. These perceptions can have consequences in terms of psychological adjustment (Jorgenson & Shultz, 2012).

Chin (2013), a former U.S. ambassador to the Asian Development Bank, argued that study abroad programs are not necessary, asserting that universities place too much emphasis on study abroad programs and too little on improving the U.S. education system, teacher accountability, and good parenting. Additionally, Chin stated that college students do not need to go abroad to learn the same material they learn while at a university. Chin also believed that some students go abroad and learn absolutely nothing and labeled the programs unnecessary distractions.

Countering his claims, Bukowski (2015) stated that Chin's argument had no merit, also arguing that students become more confident and responsible because they are removed from a

familiar and comfortable environment and are forced to come out of the comfort zone. Bukowski continued to state that opportunities to study, work, intern, or volunteer while abroad are profoundly valuable. Operating in a country where one is removed from their native language, customs, and culture, a student develops a better work ethic as well as awareness and tolerance.

One of the most important developments an individual can undergo while involved in a study abroad program is that of cultural sensitivity (Ruddock & Turner, 2007). Ruddock and Turner explored whether having an international learning experience as part of a nursing education program promoted cultural sensitivity in nursing students. The researchers conducted this study because although many countries are becoming culturally diverse, health care and nursing education remain focused on the norms and needs of the majority culture. Ruddock and Turner adopted a Gadamerian hermeneutic phenomenological approach.

Ruddock and Turner (2007) conducted in-depth, informal interviews to gain an understanding of participants' international experience and whether the experience of living and learning in another culture had affected development of cultural sensitivity. The researchers identified three concepts: (a) students were experiencing a transition from one culture to another, (b) adjusting to cultural differences, and (c) developing cultural sensitivity and growing personally. The students were reportedly learning to relate to patients with empathy, respect, and understanding as part of the process of adjusting to the host culture.

Despite the common thread of all students developing cultural sensitivity, culture shock was a more common occurrence affecting the study participants (Ruddock & Turner, 2007). The transition from one culture to another was characterized by experiences of uncertainty precipitated by a change in the participants' familiar environment, which ultimately required them to adjust. This is a common occurrence in individuals who feel they are out of their depth

about relocation to a new country. Prior to Ruddock and Turner's study, Luethge (2004) had already reported that students who undertake study abroad programs are at an inherent risk to culture shock and its associated factors. Individuals who undergo culture shock often experience various stressors, such as local travel, logistics, attempting to communicate home, heightened cultural sensitivity, and stereotypes.

#### **2.3.4. International Students in the United States and Other Countries**

One of the earliest student exchange programs to arise was the Erasmus Program in the 1980s, which provided foreign exchange options for college undergraduate and graduate students (DeWit, 2014). The program involves many of the best colleges and universities internationally. International internships are popular with this organization for graduate students and undergraduate students as the internships give students an experience of life and work in a foreign country. No matter what students' backgrounds are, the opportunities to do an international internship vary. With increases in communication technology and globalization, students can do their international internship in any corner of the globe. The inclusion of job placements in the Erasmus Program reflects the increased focus on employability within internationalization.

Much like expatriates in a foreign working community, Tung (2011) asserted that many international students often experience stress upon entering the United States, similar to the stress American students encounter when they travel abroad to participate in internationalization programs. Coming to the United States and leaving behind their family, friends, and homeland, international students from different parts of the world must learn and adapt to American cultural norms and social practices (Guest, Livett, & Stone, 2006). The process of adapting to and becoming absorbed into the dominant social culture is referred to as *acculturation* according to



Spector (2008). International students often encounter many academic and cultural challenges related to acculturation, such as trouble with English and academics, cultural adaptation, and lack of social supports (Yan & Berliner, 2009).

In the area of discrimination, Redden (2012) indicated that some post-secondary news columns stated that funding the American education of foreign students should not be used by American tax dollars. Students who are Afghan, Chinese, Iranian, Iraqi, or Turkish could, in the future, become the enemy. Gonzalez (2015) called this information misinformed and misguided. Previously, Soilemetzidis (2010) stated that revenue from fee-paying international students is an important source of revenue at U.S. colleges. Additionally, local and multinational employers are looking for the multilingual and multiculturally aware college graduate with skills, exposure, and relevant work experience (Soilemetzidis, 2008).

Gonzalez (2015) asserted that an assumption exists that graduate students might experience culture shock because they are adults, but they should not be coddled. Etter (2010) believed that the U.S. Department of Education's Program for International Student Assessment discovered that the average science scores of U.S. students were comparatively lower than the students in 12 other foreign countries. Students from the United States also were ranked seventh in the world for reading literacy, and scored lower than the foreign students in 17 developed countries in mathematics (Etter, 2010). Some critics of the millennial generation believe that the education system has coddled U.S. students, and thus students entering the universities lack patience and perseverance. They also lack the problem-solving skills that are desperately needed to weather the storms of pressure and stress faced in higher education (Howe & Strauss, 2000). Even though students are adults, they are not naturally prepared to withstand the trauma of a severe case of culture shock (Myers, 1997). Increased advance preparation regarding the nature

of culture shock and cross-cultural adjustment in the form of classes or workshops help students to become more aware of what is happening to them and to each other. However, no matter how much preparation is done for culture shock, it does not eliminate it (Hall, 1992).

Constantine, Okazaki, and Utsey (2004) examined self-concealment behaviors and social self-efficacy skills as potential mediators in the relationship between acculturative stress and depression in a sample of 320 African, Asian, and Latin American international college students. The students were from 33 countries. These participants were enrolled in four large, public, 4-year colleges and universities located in the western, southwestern, and southeastern regions of the United States. The students who were asked to participate in the study were matriculating in their first semester at their respective university, and had all recently immigrated from their country of origin (i.e., they had lived in the United States less than 6 months prior to enrolling at their university). Students were told that they could participate in the study by going to the international students' office during a given 2-week period to complete the questionnaire packet (Tian & Lowe, 2014). Some of the information included was from the Center for Epidemiologic Studies Depression Scale, designed to measure depressive symptomatology with an emphasis on depressed moods, usable by lay interviews (Radloff, 1977).

English language fluency was negatively associated with depression, such that international students who rated their English skills as lower were more depressed (Constantine et al., 2004). Although they were not the primary focus of the study, the regional origin comparisons revealed that international college students from the African continent appeared to be faring worse regarding their well-being than international students from Asia or from Latin America (Liang & Fassinger, 2008). Specifically, African international students reported lower social self-efficacy and higher levels of acculturative stress and depression than other

international students. Several possibilities for what might account for some elevated distress among African students include initial problems of African students to include adjusting to a new climate, problems in communicating with Americans, discrimination, homesickness, depression, irritability, and fatigue. Most these students also expressed a lack of comfort with U.S. culture. The relatively few studies of African international students in the United States to date suggest that race may also play a role in students' adjustment (Lupi & Batey, 2009).

A key factor the researchers noted was that of the lack of adjustment in relation to African students. Black African students express more difficulty adapting to their new surroundings than non-Black African students (Adelegan & Parks, 1985). Stress associated with being a target of racism also negatively affects African-American students (Klonoff, Landrine, & Ullman, 1999), which adds another dimension of stress to the acculturative stress experiences of African international college students. More specifically, the results point to the sheer strength of the relationship between acculturative stress and depression, beyond the effects of regional origin, gender, English fluency, social self-efficacy, and self-concealment in the initial months following international students' arrival to American universities (Larson & Chastain, 1990). The reluctance of many international students to seek formal counseling services (Dadfar & Friedlander, 1982; Mallinck-Rodt & Leong, 1992; Pedersen, 1991), especially those from Asia and Africa needs to be revisited. Intensive outreach efforts may be necessary to prevent initial acculturative stress from leading to more serious mental health disturbances.

## **2.4. Summary**

Chapter II detailed the literature search strategy compiled for this document and a review of professional and relevant literature. The researcher presented the U-curve and W-curve theoretical frameworks and their development as well as the stressful challenges students face

when participating in international internships, study abroad programs, and upon their return home. This chapter also outlined why stress management for participation in internationalization programs for college students is important. The literature review covered the percentages of American and foreign students in internationalization programs, issues for underrepresented students in these programs, and the importance of a diverse faculty to strengthen the educational influence of international opportunities and experiences for all students. The researcher also described research regarding a possible stress management technique, MBSR. Chapter III outlines how the researcher conducted the study.

## **CHAPTER III**

### **METHODOLOGY**

The purpose of this study was to explore how college students manage stress in internationalization programs. The researcher also determined the similarities and differences in how the students managed the stress. This chapter begins with a restatement of the research questions and a description of the target populations, sampling and recruitment procedures. The chapter continues with the methodological procedures that were used to carry out the proposed study. The researcher discusses the instruments of data collection and the procedures for collecting data. Next, the method of data analysis is described. The researcher presented a discussion of the validity and reliability of the proposed study and the ethical considerations associated with the research.

#### **3.1. Research Questions**

This inquiry was guided by the following research questions:

**Research Question 1:** How are college students in internationalization programs addressing stressful experiences of adjustment to living in a foreign country?

**Research Question 2:** How do college students in internationalization programs experience being in a foreign country?

**Research Question 3:** How do college students in internationalization programs experience returning home?

**Research Question 4:** Which stress management techniques are effective in helping college students cope with stress during an internationalization program?

### **3.2. Setting**

Kent State University is an eight-campus research and doctoral granting university in Northeast Ohio. It has four international campuses in Florence, Italy; Geneva, Switzerland; Beijing, China; and New Delhi, India. The main and largest campus is in Kent, Ohio, founded in 1910. The University serves the city, state, nation and world with excellence through 280 Bachelor's Degree programs, more than 50 Master's programs with more than 100 areas of specialization, as well as 23 Doctoral programs in more than 50 specializations. It has a total enrollment of 41,214 students; 34,491 which are undergraduate and 6,723 graduate students. Accredited by the Higher Learning Commission, the university is a member of the North Central Association. It has solidified its position as Northeast Ohio's number one public university, leading in enrollment, graduates and retention. Kent State University ranks number one in graduates among all colleges and universities, public and private, in Northeast Ohio. The University is also ranked as one of the top public research universities in the United States.

### **3.3. Pilot Study**

Initially, twenty students were recruited to participate in the study. The researcher wrote an email soliciting study participants, also keeping in mind working within the constraints and deadlines of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) regulations. The e-mails were sent to the Office of Global Education; the Division of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion; the Center for International and Intercultural Education; the McNair Scholars Program and the Office of Experiential Education and Civic Engagement. The researcher was able to connect with the appropriate staff in each department and division who were enthusiastic and willing to help. Soon thereafter students contacted the researcher to participate.

In the initial surveying and interviewing of twenty students it was difficult to measure for acculturative stress and to extract specific stress management data that proved to be most effective. The initial twenty students were comprised of graduate and undergraduate students who traveled to Third World countries as well as advanced countries. The researcher used the interviews to test out the initial questions and to get practice with the interview process (Petty, Thomson, & Stew, 2012). Thereafter, the researcher decided to select a sample of 10 undergraduate students that participated in internationalization programs in six Third World countries. Each of the 10 students were administered a Stress Assessment Questionnaire that included demographic information, information on their stressors, learning and expectations, and a Likert Scale of Repatriation Information. They were also interviewed using Cultural Adaptation Interview Questions to determine acculturative stress and the adaptation process upon their return home.

### **3.4. Demographics**

There were 10 selected participants among the selected study participants. Half of the participants were between the ages of 19 to 21. More than half of them (60%) were female, 60 percent were first generation college students, and 70 percent were low-income. Not all the low-income students were first generation college students and vice versa. Participants were evenly divided between Caucasian, African-American, and Hispanic. There was one Native American who is biracial, one Asian and no multiracial participants in the study. As shown in Table 1, six of the study participants had previously traveled internationally, (most in a prior university internationalization program) and all had traveled nationally.

Table 1 *Participant Demographics (n = 10)*

<b>Demographic Factor</b>	<b><i>N</i></b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Age</b>		
19-21	5	50
22-25	4	40
26-29	1	10
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	4	40
Female	6	60
<b>Ethnicity</b>		
Caucasian	4	40
African-American	2	20
Hispanic	2	20
Native American	1	10
Asian	1	10
Other	0	0
<b>Parent College (Bachelor's Deg.)</b>		
Yes	4	40
No	6	60
<b>Low-Income</b>		
Yes	7	70
No	3	30
<b>Major</b>		
Aerospace Engineering	1	10
Applied Communication	2	20
Business	2	20
Geology	1	10
Health Service	1	10



Administration		
Human Development	2	20
Management	1	10
<b>Internship/Study Abroad Site</b>		
Ghana	2	20
India	2	20
Ireland	1	10
Mexico	1	10
Peru	2	20
Nicaragua	2	20
<b>National Travel</b>		
Yes	10	100
No	0	0
<b>International Travel</b>		
Yes	6	60
No	4	40

### 3.5. Participant Selection, Recruitment, and Data Collection

As mentioned earlier, the initial sample of this study was comprised of twenty college students, in internationalization programs. They consisted of undergraduate and graduate students who participated in internationalization programs in developed as well as underdeveloped countries. After consultation with the researcher's committee, the numbers of students were eventually cut to 10 students who were all undergraduate level and participating in either study abroad or international internship programs in Third World countries. This was done to focus on the experiences of one specific group of students.

In this study, the sampling frame consisted of 10 students, who have participated, in an internationalization program at a university in northeast Ohio. The students had already studied

at least one year at the university, were at least 19 years old and had a minimum of between a 2.75 and 3.0 cumulative GPA. The researcher secured the 10 participants to achieve qualitative saturation in this study.

To recruit participants for the study, the researcher disseminated a recruitment email to five university departments that recruited students to the university's international internship or study abroad programs, or have been in the program within the last year. The recruitment email contained information about the purpose of the study and the researcher's intent to survey and interview qualifying individuals to learn about their experiences with the internationalization program (Perry & Sperazza, 2013). The email specified the inclusion criteria and instructions for interested students to contact the researcher for more information. The researcher had a brief telephone conversation to ensure that the prospective participants understood the study and met the inclusion criteria. The researcher selected 10 participants for the study, with the objective of achieving a diverse sample that included students from the mentioned populations (Suri, 2011).

The researcher employed the descriptive phenomenological method developed by the American psychologist Amedeo Giorgi (1970) to analyze the qualitative data from the Stress Assessment Questionnaire and the Cultural Adaptation Interview Questions. The researcher positioned the data analysis based on the lived experience of the participants (Giorgi, 2009). The researcher engaged in extracting from the participants their prior knowledge related to the phenomenon, to take a view of the data without outside influence (Moustakas, 1994).

To protect the identity of the participants, alphanumeric pseudonyms were assigned. The pseudonyms beginning with the letter A are female; and those beginning with the letter B are male. Then the interviews were transcribed into word documents and printed out in hard copy. The researcher carefully read each transcript to gain a clear understanding of the participants'

experiences, and to glean insights related to the perspectives of participants. During this process, the researcher, noted in the margins of the transcripts thoughts, ideas, and any common patterns that were observed (see Table 2). The researcher did not attempt to analyze or pull meaning from the data within this step, and instead focused on constructing an holistic view of each participant's response.

Table 2 *Raw Data and Researcher Notes*

Raw Data	Researcher Notes
<p>There is a black or African-Nicaraguan population.</p> <p>Also, they are more blatant about their religious beliefs than we are in the U.S.</p> <p>Those are more private matters in America.</p>	<p>1. Students noted differences in the display of religious beliefs.</p> <p>2. Felt religion was more 'private' in the US.</p>
<p>I didn't notice anything that different, except the Spanish is different and the Puerto Rican women are somewhat more assertive.</p>	<p>1. Student did not see any cultural differences, but did note linguistics differences.</p> <p>2. However the student remarked on differences in role of women.</p>

After reading the participants' entire transcripts, the researcher uploaded the transcripts into NVivo 11 software to break the content down into meaningful units. Using the notes as a guide, the data were broken into units of meaning that could be a phrase, sentence, or paragraph. Each meaning unit was assigned a descriptive code used to simply label the contents in an easily understandable manner. A total of 84 different codes were used to describe the raw data. Examples of codes and associated data are displayed in Table 3.

Table 3 *Samples of Codes and Associated Data*

Codes	Associated Raw Data
<b>Culture shock</b>	<p>I anticipated that it would be like a honeymoon all the way through. It was not.</p> <p>There was some culture shock at first, especially getting used to the poverty.</p> <p>The abject poverty, the hot weather, the people that didn't speak good English were a real culture shock.</p> <p>There was some culture shock or whatever at first. I felt invisible.</p> <p>Some of the poverty I saw was stunning. I wasn't aware that it was that bad.</p>
<b>Major culture shock</b>	<p>The initial getting used to everything. Being in a strange country and not knowing anyone and being away from family and friends was stressful. It was a major culture shock.</p> <p>Poverty, so that was the biggest adjustment for me. That was a major culture shock.</p>
<b>Experiences adapting</b>	<p>Had minimal trouble outside of the poverty because I've been exposed to other Hispanic cultures.</p> <p>I wanted more support. The host national office kind of put you on your own. I really missed my family and friends.</p> <p>Initially everything was so male oriented. There was a minimum of females.</p> <p>The people were extremely nice. They went out of their way to help you and make sure you were comfortable.</p> <p>The weather took some getting used to also.</p>

	Translating Ghana geology from American geology was a challenge as well.
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During this process, the researcher focused solely on analyzing and reporting the participants' lived experiences. Next, like codes were grouped together until no further reduction was possible. These groups were then examined for completeness, inclusion of participants' comments and any commonalities and relationships (see Table 4 for grouping samples).

Table 4 *Coded Groups*

Group	Associated Codes
<b>Adaptation</b>	Experiences adapting Issues adapting Time adapting
<b>Culture Shock</b>	Culture shock Major culture shock Discomfort with culture Double culture shock Real culture shock Initial Shock

This was a recursive process with the researcher moving and grouping data in different combinations until the data were organized and fully described the participants' overall experiences. Finally, in the fifth step of the analysis the researcher named the final groups and reported the themes in the Results section of Chapter IV. A total of 12 themes were uncovered with three associated subthemes. They include the following: 1) Dealing with stress before the trip; 2) In the beginning; 3) Living with Discomfort; 4) New Experiences; (Subtheme a: New

Experiences), (Subtheme b: Subtheme of likes), (Subtheme c: Subtheme of dislikes), 5) Seeing Differences; 6) Experiencing stress and competition; 7) Stress Management and its effects; 8) Homesickness; 9) Becoming comfortable; 10) Going home; 11) The return home; and 12) Changes in Self.

### **3.6. Research Design**

The researcher engaged a qualitative phenomenological analysis and a descriptive method to explore 10 selected college students' stress management in internationalization programs. Phenomenology is a philosophical form of study that helps researchers explore and understand everyday experiences without presupposing knowledge of those experiences (Trueman, Osuji, & El-Hussein, 2014). In other words, the researcher was open to what presents itself during the exploration of data (Converse, 2012). Kvale and Brinkmann (2009, p. 253) stated, "Phenomenology asks the question, 'What are the meaning, structure, and essence of the lived experience of this phenomenon for this person or group of people?'"

Phenomenological researchers are concerned with how people make meaning of their lived experiences and how they use those meanings and experiences to actively inform consciousness, behavior, and relationships (Patton, 2001). In-depth individual interviews typically serve as the sole method of data collection in phenomenological research (Seidman, 1998). This study followed a phenomenological design and descriptive method, using semi structured interviews to elicit stories about the students' internationalization experiences (Tuckett & Stewart, 2004). The use of this phenomenological design, Cultural Adaptation Interview Questions (Office of Assessment and Research, Kent State University, 2014), enabled the researcher to produce an in-depth, multifaceted description of the phenomenon of adjustment and

stress management from the perspective of internationalization students (Clarke & Harwood, 2014).

The research comprised the administration of an online survey instrument, the Stress Assessment Questionnaire (Office of Assessment and Research, Kent State University, 2014). The use of an online-administered research survey allowed the researcher to gather data and report descriptive statistics related to behavior and the effects of stress management used by the students. This information was presented to add additional objective depth to the data collected in the study. The questionnaire was not used as a quantitative measure.

### **3.7. Participants, Recruitment, and Sampling**

As previously mentioned, the target population of this study was comprised of college students in internationalization programs. In this study, the sampling frame consisted of students who have participated, in an internationalization program at a university in northeast Ohio. A purposeful sample of 10 students in total comprised of undergraduate students in internationalization programs in Third World Countries were selected for this study. The students had studied at least one year at the university, were at least 19 years old and had a minimum of a 2.75 cumulative GPA. Qualitative researchers have put forth different suggestions for choosing an adequate sample to achieve saturation (Xu & Storr, 2012). While Morse (2000) has suggested that six individuals is the absolute minimum for phenomenological research, Creswell and Clark (2006) suggested that researchers use sample sizes of six to 20 participants.

Specifically, Creswell (1998) maintained that phenomenological studies should utilize a sample of between five and 25 participants. Green and Thorogood (2009) purported that for most qualitative researchers, a scant amount of new information is typically found after the 20th interview. The researcher secured a sample of 10 participants to achieve qualitative saturation in

this study. The researcher did not intend to conduct inferential statistics on the survey data collected in the study. Therefore, the researcher did not attempt to recruit a larger sample for reaching empirical validity.

In qualitative research, sample selection has an especially important effect on the quality of the study because of the relatively small size of qualitative samples (Coyne, 1997). As such, purposeful sampling is a commonly used method of sampling in qualitative research (Suri, 2011). Patton (1990) stated the value of purposeful sampling lies in the information-rich participants selected for inclusion in the study. By using purposeful sampling for this study, the researcher was able to ensure that participants were selected who possessed direct experience with the phenomenon of interest, thereby increasing the richness of the gathered data (Suri, 2011). The researcher utilized inclusion criterion to select qualifying individuals for participation in the study (Scaria, Rogers, Jones, Daly, & Craufurd, 2014). The inclusion criteria specified that participants must: (a) be a current or former student at the selected university in northeast Ohio, (b) be currently participating in an internationalization program, or (c) have participated in an internationalization program within the past year. The selection of participants was based on the inclusion criteria. The researcher was mindful to select participants with the goal of maximizing variation within the sample (Suri, 2011). To achieve this, the researcher selected participants from a diversity of majors, racial and ethnic backgrounds, socioeconomic status and gender, from the undergraduate student population. The populations included majority students and underrepresented students.

Once the sample was selected, the researcher corresponded with each participant to select an agreeable date, time, and location for the individual interview (Rowley, 2012). A questionnaire was developed to gather demographic data on the students to determine the



influence of their acculturation (see Appendix A). The questionnaire's purpose was also to measure the effect of the stress management techniques the students utilized while abroad.

### **3.8. Data Collection Instruments**

Data in this study were collected using individual interviews with the participants. The participants also answered an online questionnaire. Interviews are widely supported as an effective method of data collection in qualitative research, and in phenomenological studies (Chenail, 2011; Englander, 2012; Qu & Dumay, 2011). Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) remarked, regarding data capturing during the qualitative interview, that it “is literally an interview, an interchange of views between two persons conversing about a theme of mutual interest,” where the researcher attempts to “understand the world from the subjects’ point of view to unfold the meaning of people’s experiences” (p. 150). Bentz and Shapiro (1998) stated, “The intent is to understand the phenomena in their own terms—to provide a description of human experience as it is experienced by the person herself” (p. 99). This allows the phenomenon to emerge (Groenewald, 2004).

To conduct these interviews, the researcher developed a semi structured interview guide comprised of a series of open-ended questions (see Appendix B). The researcher utilized a review of relevant literature to develop the questions listed in the interview guide, which align with the research questions guiding the study (Turner, 2010). The interview questions were designed to elicit information concerning the experience of being an internationalization student, with special focus on the stressors they encountered during and after their international work or study experience, and the stress management techniques they implemented. The researcher submitted the interviews for review by a panel of individuals involved in internationalization programs for college students. These individuals reviewed the questions to confirm relevance

and comprehension. Following feedback from the expert panel, the researcher implemented the interview protocol.

Through the interview questions, the researcher elicited responses that offered a richly detailed depiction of the essence of each student's individual experience (Englander, 2012). The interviews were conversational in nature and encouraged the participants to freely express their thoughts without being led or constricted by the interview questions (Turner, 2010). This allowed the participants to describe their experiences to the researcher, without being unduly influenced by the researcher's expectations or biases (Creswell & Clark, 2006; Moustakas, 1994). As an instrument of data collection herself, the researcher was careful to limit the influence of researcher bias on the conduct of the study. To mitigate this issue, the researcher practiced bracketing in her role as the interviewer, transcriber, and data analyst (Tufford & Newman, 2010). Bracketing refers to the setting aside of the researcher's personal views to explore the data through a more objective lens. The Stress Assessment Questionnaire (see Appendix A) was administered first to gather data related to the stressors associated with being a student and managing responsibilities, relationships, and workloads. The Cultural Adaptation Interview Questions (see Appendix B) were administered afterward to gather data related to adjustment abroad and upon returning with respect to Lysgaard's and Gullahorn and Gullahorn's theories.

### **3.9. Data Collection Procedures**

The data collection in this study consisted of individual, semi structured interviews with 10 participants. Prior to beginning data collection, the researcher first obtained approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Delaware State University to conduct the study beginning with the Application for Approval of Investigations Involving Human Subjects (Appendix C),

(Alexander, Sausville, & Decker, 2014). The researcher had obtained approval from an authorized representative of the selected northeast Ohio university to utilize their students for the study at the time the Application for Approval of Investigations Involving Human Subjects was approved (Scherr et al., 2014). After all necessary approvals were obtained, the researcher obtained informed and signed consent from the selected study participants. The informed consent process included an explanation of the purpose of the study, the requirements of participation, any anticipated risks or benefits associated with the study, the researcher's intent to audio record the interviews, and a reminder that participation is strictly voluntary (Mathews & Jamal, 2014).

After obtaining informed consent, the researcher met individually with each participant at the scheduled date and time (Edwards & Holland, 2013). Interviews were conducted at a location mutually agreed upon by the participant and the researcher (Poghosyan, Nannini, Stone, & Smaldone, 2013). The researcher selected a location that offers privacy, was comfortable for the participants, and was relatively distraction-free (Mero-Jaffe, 2011). Each participant was interviewed at least once. The interviews were conducted using the researcher-developed interview guide (Turner, 2010). The researcher also utilized follow-up questions as necessary to encourage the participants to clarify or elaborate upon a given response (Brinkmann, 2013; Edwards & Holland, 2013; Hathcock, Dickerson, Eckhoff, & Katsioloudis, 2014). A digital audio recorder recorded all interviews with the permission of the participants (Ruggiero & Watson, 2014). Each participant was assigned an alphanumerical identifier, such as A1, B1, at the time of the interview (Chu & Hsu, 2011). Each interview was labeled with the assigned identifier on the digital audio recorder. The researcher uploaded and saved the audio recordings as .wav files on the researcher's encrypted hard drive.

Delaware State University and Kent State University where the researcher recruited the participants effectively addressed the need to protect confidential and sensitive information that is maintained in the various spheres of both University administrations. Properly protecting research data is a fundamental obligation that is grounded in the values of stewardship, integrity, and commitments to the providers and sources of the data. This policy is particularly focused on the protection of research data that are confidential because of applicable law and regulation, agreements covering the acquisition and use of the data, and both University's policies. Additionally, the researcher is very familiar with anonymity, confidentiality and their centrality to ethical research practices. Once the data was collected from the students' responses, there was an anonymization of the students so that none of them would be identifiable to others (the alphanumerical identifiers). This was an additional step in ensuring their confidentiality. The researcher then transcribed the recordings and saved them as separate Microsoft Word documents to enable textual analysis of the data (Hart & Mareno, 2014). The researcher also conducted member checking to verify the accuracy of the transcripts (Mero-Jaffe, 2011). Participants were emailed a copy of their interview transcripts to review the documents for accuracy. The participants were asked to confirm that the transcript accurately reflected the discourse that occurred during the interview. This process helped to verify the accuracy of the data upon which the researcher based the study findings (Hanson, Balmer, & Giardino, 2011). The information from the answered surveys was shared with the students to ensure and confirm their accuracy.

### **3.10. Data Analysis**

The data analyzed in this study consisted of the questionnaire and the typed transcripts of the digitally recorded interviews (Doody & Noonan, 2012). The researcher examined the lived

experiences of the students who participated in either an international internship or a study abroad program. Their stress levels were measured as well as the stress management techniques they used while abroad. The researcher ascertained this information by a questionnaire and a semi structured interview with each student. The researcher employed the descriptive phenomenological method developed by the American psychologist Amedeo Giorgi in the early 1970s to analyze the qualitative data from the Stress Assessment Questionnaire and the interview questions. The five steps of Giorgi's (2009) method were described and explained in the context of analyzing the participants' lived experience within dissertation research. Giorgi's steps are the following:

1. Assume the phenomenological attitude,
2. Read entire written transcript for a sense of the whole,
3. Delineate meaning units,
4. Transform the meaning units into psychologically sensitive statements of their lived meanings, and
5. Synthesize a general psychological structure of the experience based on the constituents of the experience.

The researcher positioned the data analysis within the framework of phenomenological analysis, with a primary focus on bringing forth the phenomenon as lived by participants (Giorgi, 2009). The researcher engaged in bracketing of their prior knowledge related to the phenomenon to take a view of the data without outside influence (Moustakas, 1994). Researchers do this to deepen their understanding. The assumption that the researcher separated herself in this way has echoes of objectivity within post positivism (Petty, Thompson, & Stew, 2012). The researcher read each transcript to glean insight related to the perspectives of participants. The researcher did not attempt to analyze or pull meaning from the data within this step, but instead focused on

constructing an holistic view of each participant's response. Once the researcher read participants' entire transcripts to gain a sense of the material, the researcher then re-read the transcripts to break the content down into meaning units. After developing these meaning units, or codes, the researcher used these segments to comprise a more manageable form of the raw data that was later expressed in the third person to constitute narrative related to the phenomenon (Broome, 2011). Within this narrative, the researcher did not attempt to interpret but reported the participants' lived experiences. Converting these units comprised the fourth step of the analysis. Finally, in the fifth step of the analysis the researcher developed a full narrative of the findings, combining data with convergent meanings into units with a title that conveyed the central meaning of the experience using the NVivo11 software to facilitate discovering connections in the data as well as new insights.

### **3.11. Validity**

The concept of validity was described by a wide range of terms in qualitative studies (Loh, 2013). Lincoln and Guba (1985) used the term trustworthiness and asserted that the rigor of qualitative research should be judged by four-part criteria: (a) credibility, (b) transferability, (c) confirmability, and (d) dependability. Credibility, transferability, and confirmability correspond to the quantitative concept of validity. Dependability aligns more closely with the quantitative concept of reliability (Loh, 2013). Credibility is a measure of the degree to which research findings accurately depict the phenomenon as expressed by the participants (Lietz & Zayas, 2010). The researcher used several techniques to enhance the credibility of this study. The Stress Assessment Questionnaire and the Cultural Adaptation Interview Questions were developed by the Director of Assessment and Research at Kent State University. The Director provides direction for the University's systematic gathering, critical analysis, development,

reliability, validity, interpretation and reporting of data and assessments. The review of extensive literature and the focus group interviews conducted by this office led to the writing of additional items in the initial instrument grouped into four themes. They included; a) Demographic Information, b) Stressors, c) Student Learning, and d) Return to the U.S.

Patton (2001) advocated the use of triangulation to improve the credibility of a study. In this study, the researcher incorporated triangulation of sources (Patton, 1999). Triangulation of sources refers to the examination of information from different sources, such as diverse participants, to arrive at a balanced and comprehensive view of the phenomenon (Carter, Bryant-Lukosius, DiCenso, Blythe, & Neville, 2014).

Another strategy that contributed to the credibility of the study was negative case analysis (Loh, 2013). The researcher looked for contradictory evidence within the dataset that appeared to run contrary to the group consensus (Bowen, 2005). This evidence was presented alongside the other findings, and the implications of these findings were discussed.

The researcher enhanced credibility using member checking (Thomas & Magilvy, 2011). To incorporate member checking in the study, the researcher sent all participants a copy of their interview transcripts to review the document for accuracy. The participants were asked to confirm that the transcript accurately reflects the discourse that occurred during the interview (Mero-Jaffe, 2011). This process helped to ensure the accuracy of the data upon which the researcher based the study findings.

Transferability refers to the ability of the study's findings to be transferred to other settings or contexts (Cope, 2014). In qualitative research, the task of transferability is left to the reader (Elo et al., 2014). The researcher made sure to provide enough detailed description of the participants' experiences that the reader can determine the degree to which the findings are

transferable. In this study, the researcher contributed to the transferability of the study by providing rich, thick description of the participants' accounts (Loh, 2013). By including such detailed information, the researcher assisted the reader in determining to what other situations or populations the findings applied (Elo et al., 2014). Transferability was enhanced through the detailed description of the study sample, including key demographic information about the participants (Hanson, Balmer, & Giardino, 2011).

Confirmability denotes the extent to which the research findings reflect the views of the participants and not the views or personal biases of the researcher (Elo et al., 2014). One method the researcher used to contribute to the confirmability of this study was through the creation of an audit trail, or a step-by-step accounting of the procedures used in the study (Loh, 2013). An audit trail will allow other researchers to follow and critique the methodological procedures that this researcher utilized to carry out the study (White, Oelke, & Friesen, 2012). Negative case analysis, as previously described, also contributed to the confirmability of the study (Lietz & Zayas, 2010).

### **3.12. Reliability**

The concept of reliability is used for testing or evaluating quantitative research (Lietz & Zayas, 2010). Reliability is largely concerned with whether a study can be repeated (Yin, 2003). However, qualitative researchers recognize the difficulty in reproducing social phenomena because of the challenges involved in replicating the precise conditions under which evidence was originally collected. Even if the same students participated in a later similar study, it is highly unlikely that they would provide identical responses. Since the initial research process, their understanding of the key issues may have further evolved or changed. However, if similar studies were conducted with considerable care, one would anticipate that the findings would not



be entirely different. Hence, the issue of reliability needs to be conceptualized differently when considering qualitative studies (Broomé, 2011). From an interpretivist's perspective, reliability is concerned with demonstrating that the researcher has not invented or misrepresented data or been careless in data recording or analysis (Carcary, 2009). The researcher engaged in bracketing of the students' prior knowledge related to the phenomenon as stated previously. This allowed the researcher to engage in the Husserlian method in this phenomenological approach to take a view of the data without outside influence. (Moustakas, 1994) used this approach as did (Giorgi, 2009) in his 5-step descriptive method. Moustakas and Giorgi are Husserlian in their phenomenological approaches.

Additionally, in qualitative research, the notion of dependability is more relevant (Loh, 2013). Dependability denotes that the findings of the study are stable during a period of time and setting (Cope, 2014). Bowen (2005) emphasized the development of an audit trail as one measure that might enhance the dependability of qualitative research. Member checking, as previously described, will also contribute to the reliability of the study by confirming the accuracy of the interview transcripts (Hanson, Balmer, & Giardino, 2011). Finally, the dependability of this study will be enhanced through the rigorous observations of systematic methodological procedures (Hanson, Balmer, & Giardino, 2011; Loh, 2013).

### **3.13. Ethical Considerations**

When conducting research with human participants, researchers must address several important ethical considerations (Dresser, 2012). In the conduct of this study, the researcher adhered to the ethical principles specified by the Belmont Report (The National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects in Research, 1979). According to the Belmont Report, three chief ethical considerations in research with human participants are (a) respect for persons, (b)

justice, and (c) beneficence. Respect for persons entails the researcher's respect for the participant as an autonomous agent with free will (Mathews & Jamal, 2014). The primary means by which researchers exercise respect for persons is through the informed consent process. In this study, the researcher ensured that the study is explained thoroughly to participants, and that they understand that they may withdraw from the study at any time without consequence (Beehler, Funderburk, Possemato, & Vair, 2013). In honoring the principle of justice, the researcher ensured that all participants share equally in any possible benefit or risk associated with the study.

To assist with the equitable treatment of participants, the researcher utilized the same interview guide for all participants to ensure that the interview questions remain standard throughout the data collection process (Turner, 2010). Finally, the principle of beneficence is honored primarily through the minimization of risk and the protection of participant confidentiality (Pollock, 2012). No more than minimal risk was expected to be associated with participation in this study. The anonymization of data was implemented so that the students were not identifiable to others. To protect participant confidentiality, the researcher assigned each participant an alphanumeric pseudonym or codename at the time of the interview (Chu & Hsu, 2011). This codename served as the participant's identifier throughout the process of data recording and analysis. The researcher ensured that no personally identifying information would be included in the presentation of the results of the study. To protect the security of the collected data, all recordings were stored on the researcher's encrypted external hard drive (Girgis et al., 2014). After the recorded data was collected, the researcher stored the interviews and survey information in a locked file cabinet in the researcher's home (Aycock, Buchanan, Dexter, & Dittrich, 2012). The collected data will be stored for a period of 2 years. After this period, has

passed, all digital research data will be deleted from the researcher's hard drive and all physical data will be cross-shredded (Reardon, Basin, & Capkun, 2014).

### **3.14. Summary**

In Chapter III, through inquiry with the students, the researcher explored four research questions, as outlined in the beginning of this chapter. The setting, participant recruitment, demographics, data collection, and data analysis processes were described. The data analysis was positioned with a primary focus on bringing forth the phenomenon lived by the participants through Giorgi's (2009) method. Bracketing of the students' prior knowledge to take a view of the data without outside influence took place, as recommended by Moustakas (1994). In-depth semi structured interviews and survey data from a questionnaire with 10 internationalization students allowed the researcher to gain a deeper understanding of this phenomenon. After the analysis, the discovered themes reflected the essence of the phenomenon, allowing the reader to develop a deep and thorough understanding of the phenomenon from the perspective of individuals who have lived through the experience. The next chapter of this dissertation will present the results of this study.

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **RESULTS**

The purposes of this study were to determine how college students managed stress while participating in internationalization programs and which stress management techniques were most effective. The similarities and differences in how the students managed the stress were determined. The effect this has on their academic and work performance in the program was determined by course grade. The grades are determined by how the students functioned in the classes. Grades are based on attendance, timeliness of attendance and assignments, and accuracy of assignment submission. Assignments usually consist of written papers, oral presentations, readings, class projects (individually and collectively), as well as participation in class discussions, mid-term and final exams. Most classes related to the internationalization programs have no prerequisites. Students meet with their academic advisor to discuss which courses are the best fit with the requirements for their major. The following sections present the specific results, outcomes, themes, and the associated data.

#### **4.1. Themes**

##### **4.1.1. Dealing With Stress Before the Trip**

Five of the 10 participants reported different emotions and levels of stress associated with getting ready for the trip. There was no link between prior experience traveling internationally and level of stress or nervousness. Some of the participants indicated that they were worried or nervous about leaving the country and felt some stress. Student A5 said, “I was nervous but really wanted to go.” For Student A6, the worry started even before she knew that she was accepted. She said:

I was nervous about submitting my application. I was worried that I wouldn't be accepted for some reason. There was pressure from my family to stay at home. I really wanted this experience so I just battled it out with them.

She was dealing with stress and anxiety on a variety of levels. She was anxious to be accepted to the program, but also was aware she lacked support at home. She was worried that she would not be able to go abroad because of her family's intransigence, and ultimately had to fight to be able to go abroad. Student B1 had a very similar experience with lacking support at home and "nosy neighbors and my mother's co-workers" interfering. Other participants reported more generalized anxiety: "Somewhat stressful (Student B2)"; "I was very nervous (Student A1)"; and "I was a little overwhelmed by the predeparture orientation (Student B4)." Two of the participants reported stress associated with positive feelings. Student B1 reported, "It was exciting but a little stressful because I really didn't know what I was getting myself into." The student specified that he meant safety, political uncertainty and anything else unusual that could occur. Most of the students did not indicate what part of the program was making them feel stress and anxiety; they simply indicated that they had feelings of stress.

The other five participants indicated that they did not feel stress. Most of this group simply reported facts. For example, Student A4 said, "There were meetings about what could be expected when we were there. These kinds of orientations were quite helpful." Student A2 also reported feeling calm and said, "I was pretty calm. I even skipped the orientations..." Student B3 was factual and said, "Once you were accepted, you met with your advisor and then attended orientation and cultural immersion sessions to get prepped for the trip." Overall, the participants in this group seemed excited by the idea of going overseas and reported little stress or anxiety.

#### **4.1.2. In the Beginning**

The 10 participants in this study spoke about their initial impressions as they arrived overseas. The data that made up this theme included data units associated with the participant's initial reactions as they arrived in their host countries. Participant reactions included a range of emotions from nervousness to excitement. Participants B2 and B4 were the only participants who reported, "A major adjustment (B2)." Participant B2 found the traffic patterns very different and reported even the trip into the city was an adjustment. Participants A5, A6, B1 and B3 were all excited by the opportunity of living, working and studying abroad. This was especially true for the many participants that would be working for NGO's in their host country. For all the participants, arriving to their host counties, marked the beginning of their time overseas, and initially none of them seemed to be overwhelmed by the differences. Generally, they seemed to comment more on their observations about themselves or their surroundings, rather than reporting about interactions with others. Only one of the participants made any observations about people, saying, "the people were so friendly (B3)." None of the participants initially made any observations related to differences in culture or stress. Three of the participants noted the obvious differences in poverty levels, and indicated that they found the extreme poverty distressing. Other participants made observations about the differences in traffic, buildings, as well as, heating and cooling.

Eventually, some of the participants spoke about their initial reactions related to their internal responses. Others focused on what they saw around them related to the differences in culture. Only one participant reported a negative initial experience. Participant A2 indicated she dealt with difficulties based on race at an airport. Although she did not offer details as to what had occurred, she found the incident troubling enough to mention it when discussing her initial

impressions. Participant A1 also struggled with race as an issue, feeling like an outsider. None of her peers were African American, which left her feeling like an outsider even among those peers with whom she should feel familiar. Participant A3 did not speak about her initial impressions about her host country; rather she recalled reflecting on her path to traveling overseas. She was astounded by the fact that she could study overseas, given her personal background as a first-generation college student coming from a lower socioeconomic home with many challenges.

#### **4.1.3. Living with Discomfort**

Nine participants in the study spoke about the cultural and other differences that they faced while living abroad. They indicated which differences made them feel uncomfortable and uncertain. The participants spoke at length about experiences that they found uncomfortable. These differences were challenging and left some participants unsure of themselves.

One of the participants' main observations concerned the levels of poverty and their reactions. Participant B1 reflected the attitude of many of the participants when he said, "Some of the poverty I saw was stunning. I wasn't aware that it was that bad." Other participants were equally shocked and had a difficult time reconciling the poverty they observed daily. For many of them, it was the first time they saw such levels of need. Although the participants did not go into great detail about the poverty, they mentioned it as very challenging to adjust seeing. Comments from participants included, "The poverty. . . [was the] hardest to adapt to," "the poverty was difficult at first" and, "I wasn't aware that it [poverty] was that bad."

Many of the participants were very uncomfortable with the climate. They had difficulty adjusting to the changes in temperature. They spoke about the heat being, "something else (B2)." Other areas of discomfort included adjusting to different religious values, the role of women, and interactions between genders.

Some of the students felt that they could not understand some of the cultural differences that made them feel uncomfortable. Participant B4 spoke about arranged marriages and said, “I talked to a couple about the arranged marriages that go on there. That unnerved me. I couldn’t imagine ever choosing a life partner like that.” He did not know how to understand arranged marriages but acknowledged that American values around marriage could seem alien to his host nation as well. Participant A4 spoke about differences in the family structure and said, “They are very closely knit to their families. I think they may be too enmeshed, like co-dependent family relationships. My family and my friend’s families are not that closely knit.” She had difficulty seeing the familial relationships as healthy and appropriate and remarked, “I struggled with that.”

The participants spoke about the emotions that accompanied their difficulties with adjustment. Participant A6 said, “I felt uncomfortable” and indicated that she felt a need to hide her reactions to be polite. Other reactions expressed by the participants included being, “a little overwhelmed (B4),” “was hard for me to take (A4),” and “I felt alienated and alone (A1).” The participants were not sure how to process their feelings in the beginning and did not indicate that they employed stress management techniques to help them adjust.

#### **4.1.4. New Experiences**

The participants were very mature and also very open to new experiences. Reactions to the new experiences the students had surrounding them included culture, food, and people. This theme was made up of the subthemes new experiences, likes, and dislikes.

**Subtheme of likes.** The participants had a wide variety of experiences while living overseas. They reported what they liked and disliked during the interviews. All the participants easily named positive aspects of their time. The following information includes the responses that were included in this theme.



The participants were very positive about their experiences while abroad. Learning information about a different culture was enlightening and offered the participants the opportunity to, “appreciate others viewpoints and the way they do things (student B4).” Learning about different cultures was also identified as valuable. Student A6 stated, “[I enjoyed] the opportunity to learn how another culture lives and gets educated. I enjoyed comparing and contrasting with the American way of doing things.” She could use the experience to engage in critical thinking and compare the culture of the United States with that of her host country. Student B4 said, “Learning how to study and work with other cultures. That was the most stressful part also. Learning to appreciate other’s viewpoints and the way they do things.” Student B4 had mixed feelings about his time abroad. While he indicated interacting with people of other cultures was enjoyable, he also found it highly stressful. He constantly had to adjust to other’s viewpoints.

Another part of the experience the participants enjoyed was the ability to reach out and help others. Student B3 said, “[I liked] the opportunity to use my skills in another country that needed them.” “Working side by side in the community” was described by student A3 as one of her favorite experiences. Other aspects of being abroad the participants reported enjoying included the food, a feeling of autonomy, and making new friends. One student, A1, found it interesting to travel and observe, “Black people in other countries, even Ireland.” She could learn more about race and culture than she knew before her time abroad.

**Subtheme of dislikes.** This theme is made up of the experiences the participants reported disliking with residing abroad. The main area of dislike reported by the participants surrounded their interactions with other foreign students (not from their host countries) in the classroom and in work settings. The participants indicated that these other students were highly competitive

which made the participants feel: “in great competition with those foreigners (B1)”; “feeling out of place/less than some of my peers (A3)”; and, “feeling the stress of being in competition (B4).” One recurrent thought that arose was linked to feelings of being inadequate. The students felt as if they lack competence when compared to their foreign peers. For many of the participants, the classroom and work settings created high levels of stress. Two students indicated that they felt “out of place.” They lacked a feeling of belonging, which was tied to the idea they felt less competent or prepared. They disliked the aura of competition that seemed connected to academics and the workplace. B2 stated, “I felt like I was in competition and that I might not do well enough.” The feelings of competition were linked to the worry that they were not smart enough to succeed in the classroom or at work. B4 described this feeling and said, “[I had] feelings of inadequacy around the really smart foreign students and employees.” Five participants stated, “Many of them speak four and five different languages, which was intimidating.”

Three of the participants indicated that they had issues with the climate. They believed that they were not adequately prepared for the differences and reported being uncomfortable. A4 described her experience and discomfort with the equatorial heat saying:

Sometimes the weather was too hot. What I thought were cool clothes that I brought weren't cool enough. On several occasions, I had to go shopping for cooler clothes. When the air conditioner wasn't as powerful as it should be, it was hard to concentrate with that kind of heat. The 85-degree weather there felt very different from the 85-degree weather in the United States.

Although the actual temperatures were similar they felt different to her. A4 found that the climate differences made it challenging to be successful in the classroom and work settings because she felt physically uncomfortable, which made it difficult for her to focus. One other participant complained about the heat, while another complained about rain and cold. One

participant complained that a class he was registered for only contained exchange students lessening his time with students who were native to the area. Overall, participants reported no major dislikes outside of issues with levels of competition. They seemed to enjoy their time abroad and were open to new experiences.

#### **4.1.5. Seeing Differences**

Nine of the study participants spoke about comparisons between home and the country where they resided during their study and work abroad. They compared the cultures and spoke about the differences they observed. It was interesting to note that the participants had a wide variety of experiences. They all observed differences, but there was little overlap in the type of differences they spoke of when recalling their time abroad. Two of the participants noted that gender roles were rigidly defined. Participant A3 said, “the women have a role of staying home, cooking, and caring for the children.” She indicated that most of her internship time was spent with men which was also a difference for her.

The other commonality noted by the participants was the role of religion in their host countries. Three of the participants spoke about the role of religion in daily life. They found that religion played a predominate role and was more openly spoken about in their host countries when compared to the United States. Participant B1 said, “I think the religious experience is different. So much of Mexico City and the country is traditional Catholic. At home, we have many religions even though most of us are Christian.” He found the dominance of a single religion to be very different. He indicated that religious expression seemed to be more traditional and open. Participant A3 spoke about the ubiquitous nature of religion and stated, “They were very open with and proud of their religious beliefs - this does happen in America, but I feel it is

more diverse here with less outward discussion.” Religion was a part of daily life and openly expressed. She compared this to the United States where religion has lower levels of expression.

Other differences noted by participants included food, transportation, how classes were conducted, weather, language and electronic usage. These observations were less about culture and more about how society functioned. The traffic conditions were remarked on by some participants. They noted the chaotic nature of travel with Participant B2 noting, “Riding in a car in India is like riding the dodge ‘em cars at amusement parks.” The food as an expression of culture was also noted with participants indicating an adjustment was necessary but the food was very enjoyable. Participant B4 said, “The food was different. It was good different though.” Another observation by two of the participants was the nature of time. Culturally, they found being on time was not an ingrained response. Participant A5 said, “Classes and meetings were always late.” She was used to everything running on time. Making the adjustment to a different time sense was challenging for her.

#### **4.1.6. Experiencing Stress and Competition**

This theme was drawn from the data associated with how the participants described their experience of stress and how they handled the stress while they were abroad. The data on experiences with stress was organized into three categories: 1) stress associated with their living situation; 2) stress associated with classes and work; and 3) social stress. For these participants, the highest level of stress was associated with instances of competition or feelings associated with being in competition in class and at work. These three categories were merged into one because they were all connected by the idea of stress associated with their regular activities. A subtheme of *stress management* was used to describe how the participants dealt with and managed stress in this situation.

When asked about stress, none of the students reported any levels of stress associated with daily living or interacting with others in social settings. The main areas where they expressed concerns were connected to classes or work. Many of the students reported feelings of inadequacy that led to feelings of stress. B2 stated, “None where I lived but I did where I studied. We took two management classes. I felt a lot of stress competing in the classroom.” He went on to state that he felt in competition with other foreign exchange students but not local students. He believed local students were more understanding and supportive. B3 also experienced this sense of competition that was associated with stress and said, “The competition was very stressful, especially among some of the conceited males from other countries. I was thinking, ‘Ok, we know you’re smart. You don’t have to rub it in.’” He felt that other students were not only competitive, but actively attempting to show they were better and smarter. The way he described the experience, showed he believed the other students were deliberately attempting to make him feel inferior.

Another student, A6, in response to questions about stress described her view of the situation and remarked, “I didn’t feel as bright as some of the other foreign students that came from better backgrounds than I did. I felt intimidated by the Canadian students too, like they were smarter than me.” It was interesting to note that two students, including A6 referenced a difference in socio-economic status, as a partial cause of these feelings. A5 and A6, both stated they felt at a disadvantage because they had not had access to the same types of experiences and education as some of the other students, because their personal socio-economic backgrounds did not allow for travel or academic enhancement.

Two of the participants in the study reported no real stress. A1 simply indicated that she experienced no stressful situations, while A2 elaborated and said, “Not really. I am from Puerto

Rico so I am usually the person with the different cultural background so I was able to use my experience the other way around.” She was accustomed to have to adjust to other settings and become comfortable. She used those transferable skills to smooth her path and adjust to novel settings.

Some of the female participants in the study reported difficult relationships with males in other countries. This caused stress and anxiety for these participants. A3 spoke about this situation and said:

[I felt stressed] Sometimes with the older male adults when I could not communicate my words the way I wanted. I felt like I wasn't trying hard enough to learn their language. I say male because that's who we worked with most. The women were very understanding of this barrier as were the children.

A3 felt judged because she did not speak the language of her host country fluently; however, she did indicate that women and children seemed to understand she was doing her best and worked with her to aid her in being understood. A6 had the same experience with males and other females and said, “The men of all of the cultures were intimidating, not the women so much. They were helpful and understanding.” She felt comfortable dealing with members of the same gender, however, she implied that the men she worked with were not as understanding.

#### **4.1.7. Stress Management and its Effects**

The participants in this study discussed how they managed the issues which the stress created by living, studying and working abroad. To find this theme, the researcher re-interviewed the students, then carefully examined the data. Data fragments that were associated with stress management were coded.

The participants related three main stress management techniques they used to manage their feelings of stress while abroad. They indicated these techniques were like the techniques

they used while at home in the United States. The three main stress management methods used were:

1. meditation and prayer,
2. talking with peers, and
3. asking for help from a person in authority.

Several of the participants indicated that using prayer and/or meditation as helpful.

Participant A5 said she managed stress “by praying.” Participant B4 reported a similar experience and said, “meditation made him more patient and compassionate toward the people.” Participant B2 reported using both and stated that he, “managed stress by praying and meditating regularly.”

Leaning on peers for support was also a method chosen by the participants to handle stressful situations. Participant A3 said when she was stressed she “talked to my roommate and connected with peers.” Likewise, Participant A4 said she managed stress by “talking to classmates and co-workers.” Being able to receive support from peers helped the students process experiences and talk about their reactions in a place that felt supportive. By leaning on others, the participants could manage their stress and deal with their new experiences.

Many of the participants indicated that when they faced a stressful situation and were uncertain of how to react, they sought out the support and advice of people in charge. Participant B3 said that he, “always went to the people in authority directly.” He would use their aid to manage the situation. Participant A5 agreed and said, “I asked someone in the position to help, like a higher up.” The participants generally felt comfortable going to authority figures to seek help when they faced a situation they could not manage. One participant, Participant B3, indicated that the “Host Office could have been more supportive.”

Overall the participants used multiple methods to manage stress. The methods they used while abroad were like those they used within the United States. No participant indicated that they developed novel coping methods, and none reported using stress management techniques such as deep breathing or journaling. The participants felt that the techniques they employed were effective both at home and abroad, and no participant indicated a need to learn other methods for managing stress.

#### **4.1.8. Homesickness**

Although the participants in the study enjoyed their time abroad all mentioned missing home or being homesick. They generally defined missing home as missing specific people or general comforts. Six of the participants explicitly stated they missed their families. Participant A5 said, “At first I was really homesick because I was away from family and the support of my friends and extended family.” Not only did the participants miss having family in close physical proximity, they also reported missing the support they were used to receiving from those around them.

Several of the participants indicated that they missed creature comforts they were used to having in the United States. For example, Participant B1 said, “I missed some of the TV shows that they didn’t have there.” They were unaccustomed to the difference in living standards. Dealing with the reality of residing in a Third World country was a novel experience. Participant B2 spoke about his struggles with adjustment and said, “I had to get an adapter. I borrowed one from another student until I could get one. I forgot my parents told me about the electricity.” Something as simple as electricity was different. The participants were forced to adapt to differences in culture, living standards, and food, which played into their adjustment and feelings of missing home.



When speaking of homesickness, the participants indicated that it was a passing sensation. The participants used phrases such as “at first,” “eventually,” and “in the beginning” when describing their feelings of homesickness. As they adjusted to the culture surrounding them, those feelings eased and they became used to their surroundings.

#### **4.1.9. Becoming Comfortable**

Although the participants reported feeling homesick or uncomfortable initially, they began to make adjustments and allowances for the local culture. Two participants indicated that the adjustment was “difficult at first,” while the remainder of the participants indicated that they more easily made the adjustment. A factor that fed into their ability to adjust to local culture and customs was the participants desire to be respectful. Participant A6 said, “I just smiled and nodded along because I didn’t want to seem rude.” Although she did not agree with some of the local customs, she felt it was important to be accepting. Her goal was to learn and not conflict with others. It was more important to Participant A6 to be respectful, than to express her own opposing point of view.

Several participants indicated that they made the adjustment because they like the people they met and wanted to be open and accepting. Participant B4 said, “I think it helped that the people were so nice.” He enjoyed the people around him and wished to understand their culture and worldview. Participant B3 indicated that he had difficulty adjusting and noted, “The Ghanaians seemed to be very patient with me.” One of the keys to adjusting to the culture seemed to be the positive interactions the participants reported having with the people around them. Because the participants had positive interactions with the people they met, they wished to adjust and to be accepting of them.

#### 4.1.10. Going Home

The participants in the study spoke at length about their feelings as they prepared to leave to return home. They indicated that while they were happy to return home, they also realized that they had some mixed emotions. The participants had established ties to their host countries and realized there were people they would miss.

Participant A5 was clear as she spoke about her mixed feelings as she prepared to return home. She said:

I had mixed feelings. I couldn't wait to see my family again, my friends, etc. But there was a small part of me that didn't want to leave. I met some nice people there and the food was really good!

She was excited at the thought of returning home and seeing her family and friends. At the same time, she acknowledged she was torn at the thought of leaving. She went on to describe her emotions and remarked, "I was excited and sort of sad while I was packing. At the same time, I was restless and irritable. Sometimes I didn't know if I wanted to go home or stay a little longer." Her feelings manifested as a combination of restlessness and irritability, she felt unsure about returning, and was conflicted about leaving. She felt unclear as to whether she wished to go or to stay.

Some of the emotions the participants felt as they prepared to return home included irritability, excitement, sadness, relief, disappointment, gratitude, happiness, discouragement, and guilt. Some of the negative emotions associated with the return were related to feeling, "When it came closer to time to leave, it was hard to leave. I felt like I would miss the people I came to know there (B1)." Most of the participants echoed this sentiment saying, "I met some nice people there (A5)," "I felt like I would miss a lot of the people (B4)," and "I knew I'd miss how nice the people were." Three participants in the study had formed close bonds with others

while they resided overseas and felt that the sundering of those connections would be difficult. Some participants indicated they wished they could take people home with them when they left.

A part of the mixed emotions expressed by the participants of the study were connected to their desire to be removed from the poverty they observed daily. This feeling was best expressed by Participant A3 who said, “[I was] excited to be in the comforts of my own home. However, I felt a bit of guilt knowing my life in America is so much more advanced than the living conditions in Nicaragua.” She had observed the differences in the standard of living and was relieved to return to the United States, but torn by the poverty she had observed. She felt guilt that her standard of living was much higher than many of the people around her, and the fact that she could escape the poverty that others accepted as normal. Participant B3 also spoke about this dilemma and stated:

I was thrilled to be getting out of the poverty. . . I felt very grateful that I live the lifestyle that I live and realize that we have so much in America and so many Americans are miserable. I wonder WHY? Here these people have very little and are seeming to be so happy and much less self-absorbed than Americans.

While he was grateful for his lifestyle, he had difficulty reconciling his affluence when compared to those who lived in abject poverty in his host nation. He went on to speak about his lack of understanding of people in the United States who had more material possessions but seemed unhappier than the people who lived in poverty. Attempting to reconcile this dichotomy was challenging for him.

#### **4.1.11. The Return Home**

The participants shared information about their return home after being overseas. Some spoke about the travel and leaving their host countries while others focused on their feelings after their return. Several of the participants expressed feelings of sadness, with Participant A4

remarking, “I felt sadder as we were leaving to go to the airport.” She went on to speak about processing her experience and said, “[I have] not quite [processed the experience]. The people in America are very different than Ghanaians personality wise.” She felt that she was still trying to understand everything she had learned and needed time to complete that process. Participant A6 expressed similar sentiments and stated, “I think I am having double culture shock if there is such a thing. I think I’m still taken aback by the level of poverty in Managua. I’m also still sort of processing what poverty is here.” Participant A6 acknowledged that returning to the United States and readjusting was another form of culture shock. Her residence abroad made her examine her views on poverty, a process, which for her, was still ongoing. For all of the participants, the experience of being abroad was profound. Participant B2 indicated he felt as if he would never fully process his experience; it would be an ongoing process for him.

Participant A3 struggled with integrating her experiences. When she first arrived back to the United States, she said:

It felt weird for a few days. Knowing how privileged I am. I had feelings of disgust for the children in my life as they seemed so ungrateful and entitled. They aren't my children so. . . It wasn't my place to correct their actions, but it was quite frustrating. I didn't make comments letting them know how good they have it, but an actual life lesson was much needed. That was probably my biggest challenge.

She felt out of place and had issues reconciling the privilege she had in the United States. She was also disturbed by the attitude of the children around her. She compared them to people she interacted with while abroad, and felt that they lacked gratitude for the comfort of their lives. She went on to experience feelings of disappointment in herself and said:

Unfortunately, I came home with this desire to change things to get involved with service, but I haven't. I do have a very busy home life with full time work and school and children and meetings, but there is always time to volunteer. I just don't make it.

She returned to the United States with a desire to become more involved in her community. Participant A3 wanted to be a force for change and share the lessons she learned while overseas. She felt that the mundane tasks associated with everyday life had taken over and was disappointed in her inaction. She concluded by stating, “I’m disappointment in myself by saying this.” Participant A3 compared herself to other students who also studied abroad saying, “I know that a lot of the students on the trip went and did great things with their experiences and I feel I failed completely in doing so.” She believed that her experience was profound. When comparing herself to other participants, A3 felt at a disadvantage and believed that she had failed to share the knowledge she gained through her overseas experience.

Participant B1 reported a similar reaction to the behavior of others after he returned from his time overseas. He stated:

It felt a little strange for a while. In fact, I was stressed with people who were complaining all the time. I needed to meditate and get into exercise to deal with the stress of being with them. To me, they were complaining about stuff that was foolish. I thought about where I just came from and I’m thinking, “you’ve been complaining too long!” I eventually got all settled in internally.

Upon his initial return to the United States, he felt “strange” and found that he had little patience for the complaints of others. He felt the need to use stress reduction techniques to be able to deal with some of his adjustment. Participant B1 believed that many people took, for granted the daily luxuries they had because of their location in the United States.

Other participants reported easier assimilation of the study abroad and international internship programs. Participant A2 felt her experiences were very enjoyable and had little problem readjusting to life in the United States. She said, “I feel like this summer was a dream; it passed so fast and it was so full of wonderful and refreshing experiences that sometimes it’s hard to remember it all happened and was real.” She found the experience rewarding and was looking

forward to sharing it with others. Even those who reported easy readjustments were profoundly affected by their experiences. Participant A1 felt she was able to quickly process her experiences abroad and said, “I think it has made me look at prejudice here in America in a new light. It’s not so acceptable anymore.” Her experience made her re-evaluate her previously held beliefs and change her viewpoint of prejudice in the United States.

#### **4.1.12. Changes in Self**

All the participants noted changes in themselves after their experiences abroad. They believed the changes were positive and lead to self-awareness and growth. Several of the participants spoke about gaining a sense of gratitude. They gained a realization of all the opportunities they had available and the daily luxuries they had taken for granted. Participant A3 said, “I gained a greater respect for those who live in such harsh conditions and I became extremely grateful seeing it firsthand.” She was grateful for her life but was also appreciative for the opportunity to learn about others. Overall, the participants spoke about a general sense of gratitude, although Participant B4 indicated that he was grateful for the ease of transportation in the United States.

Many of the participants indicated friends and family members commented on their changes. Participant A1 stated, “My family and friends say I seem more relaxed.” Before her experience abroad, she always worried about time. After being in Peru, she said, “I’ve learned not to be so controlled by time. If I relax and use common sense, I can still get places on time.” She took what she had experienced and applied it to her own life, increasing her sense of flexibility.

Another area of change remarked upon by the participants was their acceptance of other cultures. They found their experiences abroad broadened their outlook and created an openness

to other cultures and experiences. For example, Participant A2 said, “I am more open to other views and other lifestyles.” Her experiences helped her to be accepting of other cultures.

Participant A2 also stated, “I’ve become more curious about learning more.” Not only had she become more open, Participant A2 was eager to learn more so she could continue to grow in understanding.

Participants also spoke of their admiration of other cultures in conjunction with behavioral changes. Participant B4, spoke about how seeing the role of family while abroad changed his viewpoint and said, “I have come to value family life more.” Participant A3 said, “I gained a greater respect for those who live in such harsh conditions.” She gained an understanding and respected those who lived in poverty and had few material possessions. For participant A2, the experience enabled her to see the many variations in Hispanic culture and changed some of her personal habits. She said, “I also eat healthier and have developed an interest in cooking Mediterranean and other kinds of food.” Her exposure to a new culture shaped her behavior and led to new habits.

## **4.2. Answers to the Research Questions**

This study was guided by four research questions. The following information addresses each research question and how the findings of this study answered each question.

### **4.2.1. Research Question 1**

How are college students in internationalization programs addressing stressful experiences of adjustment to living in a foreign country?

The 10 students in the international internships and the study abroad programs from the Selected Study Participants reported a variety of emotions and levels of stress associated with different aspects of the program in which they participated. Some students felt stress preparing

for the trip even extending to completion of the application. Two students experienced cognitive dissonance, due to pressure from family and acquaintances to remain at home. These students indicated that this lack of support was a large stressor and they addressed it by open confrontation with the family members and the acquaintances.

Some students felt overwhelmed with the predeparture orientation. Two students expressed stress associated with the excitement about the program. In the beginning the students were addressing the stressful experiences of living in a foreign country by talking with peers. Some of the data in the study suggested that the students' adjustment was influenced by accessibility, the amount and the kind of contact they had with host nationals. Most of the students addressed their stressful experiences by seeking out someone in authority among the host nationals or mentors in the programs, especially in the early stages of the program. One student cited that the host country did not provide sufficient support for them and weren't as helpful as they could have been. Three students meditated to address stress.

#### **4.2.2. Research Question 2**

How do college students in internationalization programs experience being in a foreign country?

Initially, the students experienced a combination of missing family and close friends and excitement with being in a foreign country. They cited enjoying new experiences around the culture, the food and interacting with the people. Only one student experienced a negative situation initially, as she encountered racism at an airport. Shortly thereafter students began to cite differences in the cultures that were noticeable and sometimes troubling to them. The students found the poverty especially distressing.



Other differences included the extremes in the weather, whether related to heat, cold or rainy weather; feeling out of place; sometimes where classes were held, how instruction was given, some of the country's religious values, food preferences, dress code, gender relations, electronic usage, heating and cooling, language, public transportation, the foreign exchange rates, and concepts of time. With time the students accepted and adjusted to the cultures with the one notable exception being their reactions to the poverty they observed. Some students cited a change in themselves related to the food in the country they visited. Two students adjusted to the food and after their return sought it out.

#### **4.2.3. Research Question 3**

How do college students in internationalization programs experience returning home?

Some of the students had mixed feelings about returning home. They were happy to leave the poverty and return to the comforts of home. These students expected to return to an unchanged home as unchanged individuals, which was not the case. Other students anticipated returning home to be a very positive experience and were surprised to find that other feelings and experiences were involved in their return. While some students indicated they were happy to return home, they missed the ties they established in their host country. Some of the students indicated they were restless, irritable and discontent along with being glad to return to their loved ones. Female students expressed gratitude to return home to the United States, where gender roles aren't so rigidly defined.

All the students expressed the desire to be removed from the poverty they experienced regularly. They reported gratitude for living in a country as advanced as the United States and impatience with people who were complaining about things they felt were insignificant, compared to what they observed and experienced while abroad. There was a connection between

the students who had previous international traveling experiences, socioeconomic status, culture shock and reverse culture shock. The students who had previous international traveling experiences adjusted more easily in their host country and to the return home. Though they may have felt culture shock and reverse culture shock, it lacked the severity of the students who had no previous international traveling experiences. The students that experienced difficulty returning home were also low income and/or first generation college students.

Personal conflicts arose from students' awareness of changes in themselves and others, as well as physical and cultural differences between their host country and their home country. Returning students sought support and receptivity from family and friends to decrease the impact of reentry. Several students cited that they didn't get this support and instead encountered conflict with some of the family members, as well as their parental friends and acquaintances. Two students cited their return adjustment as "severe." Several of the students indicated that although they returned to United States nine months or a year ago, they still had not made the full adjustment to being home.

#### **4.2.4. Research Question 4**

Which stress management techniques are effective in helping college students cope with stress during an internationalization program?

The stress management technique that seemed most effective in helping the students cope with stress was meditation. The most stressful situations for almost all the students in the study was feeling that they were in competition with foreign students from other countries in the classroom and in the workplace. There were three students who practiced three different forms of meditation as a stress management tool. The results they cited included patience, perseverance and compassion in situations where they initially felt irritated. Other feelings reported included

calmness, a higher frustration tolerance with people and in situations they encountered, as well as, the ability to better accept harsh conditions.

Another stress management technique that was reported as effective was communicating with peers. The students indicated they spent time together as a group when they encountered difficulty. They felt a sense of relief that they weren't experiencing the difficulty alone. The students were able, on many occasions, to develop solutions to their difficulties or approach the correct people to assist them in managing stressful situations. The final technique that seemed effective for the students coping with stress was contacting someone in authority who could assist them. Sometimes the students would approach the person in authority together. They felt a sense of stress relief when they did this.

#### **4.3. Summary**

Chapter IV was used to report the results of this research study. The purposes of the study and the results of the data analysis were reported. The participants in the study were very forthcoming and willing to share information about their experiences. They had a wide range of information to share and could clearly articulate how they experienced stress, dealt with stress both abroad and upon their return home. They shared information about the challenges of living abroad and adjusting to the local culture. They were also very forthcoming as they described the culture shock they experienced upon returning home.

Chapter V will contain a further brief discussion of the results of this study and how the findings provide a contribution to the existing body of literature. This chapter will also cover how the results of the study relate to the two theoretical frameworks. It will conclude with implications for future professional practice and recommendations for further research.

## **CHAPTER V**

### **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

There is currently a great need for college graduates to possess multinational leadership skills and experience to be successful employees and expatriates. A multinational leader's assignment success will most likely be accompanied by stress (Foster, 1997). Many times, the reason for expatriate failure, or an expatriate returning to their home country before their assignment is completed, is due to stress from culture shock. The workforce recognizes the value of international internships and study abroad programs for college students as a vehicle for global workplace competency. It is expected that students will translate these experiences into a framework recognizable to prospective employers as well as their contribution to their workplace skills and competency. The purpose of this study was to determine the effects of stress management on college students' performance in internationalization programs.

The current expatriate failure rate exceeds 50%, with costs exceeding \$2 billion a year. Of this percentage, 40% are American expatriates (Sims & Schraeder, 2005). There are several major components of stress associated with expatriate failure including culture shock, uncertainty regarding the outcomes of expatriate performance, lack of control over situations, ambiguity, and anxiety concerning performance expectations (Ament, 2016). Additionally, international assignments are characterized by uncertainty, lack of control, and ambiguity (Wilkinson & Singh, 2010). Expatriates also deal with other increasingly stressful aspects of their jobs above and beyond the stressors related to cultural adjustments and international relocation stress, particularly the rising costs of living (Tickell & Peck, 2005), the introduction of taxes, and other cost of living increases that do not effect nationals (Thomas, Cortes, & Daly, 2017). Per Holmes and Rahe's (1967) Social Readjustment Rating Scale, of the 40 most stressful

life events, half can be directly or indirectly associated with the international relocation of a family, including a change in financial status (ranked 15th), a change or new line of work (17th), wife starting or stopping work (25th), changes in residence (31st), school (32nd), and social activities (34th).

The students in this study participated in internationalization programs consisting of study abroad and international internships. It was determined how these students addressed stressful experiences related to: (a) living in a foreign country; (b) how they adjusted to being in a foreign country; (c) how they experienced the return home; and (d) the stress management techniques that were the most effective in coping with stress during participation in their respective programs. Initially, 20 college undergraduate and graduate students from a Midwestern university in northeast Ohio participated in the study. A pilot study took place first. These students (undergraduate and graduate) participated in internationalization programs in underdeveloped countries as well as economically advanced countries (see Table 5). In the initial surveying and interviewing of the 20 students, it was difficult to measure specifically for acculturative stress and stress management data that proved to be most effective. Therefore, it became necessary to select a sample of 10 undergraduate students who participated in internationalization programs in Third World countries (see Table 6).

Table 5 *Pilot Study Students*

NAME	ETHNICITY	GENDER	INCOME	1st GENERATION	MAJOR	INTERNATIONAL PROGRAM	COUNTRY
<b>B1</b>	African American	Male	Low	Yes	Bus./ Computer Info. Systems	International Internship	Mexico City, Mexico
<b>A1</b>	African American	Female	Low	Yes	Human Development/ Family Studies	Study Abroad	Dublin, Ireland
<b>A2</b>	Hispanic	Female	Low	No	Communications	Study Abroad	Cusco, Peru
<b>B2</b>	Native American/ Asian	Male	Middle	No	Business Administration/ Mgt.	International Internship	Delhi and New Delhi, India
<b>A3</b>	Caucasian	Female	Low	Yes	Human Development/ Family Studies	International Internship	Managua, Nicaragua
<b>A4</b>	Caucasian	Female	Middle	No	Geology	International Internship	Accra, Ghana
<b>B3</b>	Caucasian	Male	High	No	Aerospace Engineering	International Internship	Accra, Ghana
<b>B4</b>	Caucasian	Male	Low	Yes	Health Services Administration	International Internship	Delhi and New Delhi, India
<b>A5</b>	Asian/Pacific Islander	Female	Low	Yes	Entrepreneurship/ Corporate Exec.	Study Abroad	Cusco, Peru
<b>A6</b>	Hispanic	Female	Low	Yes	Communications	Study Abroad	Managua, Nicaragua
<b>B5</b>	Caucasian	Male	Low	Yes	Music Education	Study Abroad	Florence, Italy
<b>B6*</b>	Caucasian	Male	Middle	Yes	Political Science	International Internship	Geneva, Switzerland
<b>A7*</b>	Caucasian/ Asian	Female	Middle	No	International Relations	International Internship	Geneva, Switzerland
<b>A8</b>	Caucasian	Female	Low	Yes	Psychiatry	Study Abroad	Florence, Italy
<b>A9</b>	African American	Female	Low	Yes	Social Science	Study Abroad	Florence, Italy
<b>A10</b>	Hispanic	Female	Low	Yes	Pre-Med	Study Abroad	Vancouver, British Columbia
<b>A11</b>	African American	Female	Low	Yes	Psychology	International Internship	Yongin, South Korea
<b>B7*</b>	African American	Male	Middle	No	Business	International Internship	Yongin, South Korea
<b>A12*</b>	African American	Female	Middle	No	Higher Education Administration	International Internship	Accra, Ghana
<b>B8*</b>	African American	Male	Middle	No	Public Administration	International Internship	Florence, Italy

\*denotes graduate students

Table 6 *Selected Study Participants*

NAME	ETHNICITY	GENDER	INCOME	1st GENERATION	MAJOR	INTERNATIONAL PROGRAM	COUNTRY
<b>B1</b>	African American	Male	Low	Yes	Bus./Comp. Information Systems	International Internship	Mexico City, Mexico
<b>A1</b>	African American	Female	Low	Yes	Human Development/ Family Studies	Study Abroad	Dublin, Ireland
<b>A2</b>	Hispanic	Female	Low	No	Communications	Study Abroad	Cusco, Peru
<b>B2</b>	Native American/Asian	Male	Middle	No	Business Administration /Mgt.	International Internship	Delhi and New Delhi, India
<b>A3</b>	Caucasian	Female	Low	Yes	Human Development/ Family Studies	International Internship	Managua, Nicaragua
<b>A4</b>	Caucasian	Female	Middle	No	Geology	International Internship	Accra, Ghana
<b>B3</b>	Caucasian	Male	High	No	Aerospace Engineering	International Internship	Accra, Ghana
<b>B4</b>	Caucasian	Male	Low	Yes	Health Services Administration	International Internship	Delhi and New Delhi, India
<b>A5</b>	Asian/Pacific Islander	Female	Low	Yes	Entrepreneurship/ Corporate Exec.	Study Abroad	Cusco, Peru
<b>A6</b>	Hispanic	Female	Low	Yes	Communications	Study Abroad	Managua, Nicaragua

### 5.1. Findings Contributing to the Existing Body of Literature

Many researchers have specified that stress management training on overseas employment effectiveness warrants further research. Kahn (2010) stated that it is widely believed that internationalization programs are important in the personal growth of college students. Caligiuri, Lazarova, and Tarique (2005) asserted that cross-cultural training facilitates employees feeling comfortable living and working in a host country, enhances their cross-cultural adjustment and strengthens their ability to understand and appreciate multiple cultural

perspectives. Given the dismay regarding the high ratio of expatriate failure, the high cost of these failures, and how they impact the current international workforce, Bennett, Aston, and Colquhoun (2000) put forth three specific recommendations to enhance the success and minimize the failure of expatriate assignments. These specific recommendations included managing change (personal and professional transitions), managing cultural differences, and managing professional responsibilities (Bennet et al., 2000).

Ko and Yang (2011) contended that cross-cultural training programs should be developed in such a way that the goals and objectives will help assignees manage stress in terms of personal and professional transition, managing cultural differences, and managing their responsibilities within a different cultural environment. Overseas assignments require that expatriates establish extensive contact and trust with the nationals of the host country (Ko & Yang, 2011). Tung (1981) suggested that cultural assimilation training should be supplemented by language, sensitivity, and field training. According to Eschbach, Parker, and Stoerberl (2001), cultural awareness training is the process by which an individual understands the home culture and the effect his or her behavior can potentially have on the home culture; this allows for a deeper understanding of cultural differences. The strength of cultural awareness training comes from the fact that the trainees learn to appreciate cultural differences and to apply whatever they learn to enhance the effectiveness of cross-cultural interactions.

Littrell and Salas (2005) argued that learning by doing is the inherent nature of internationalization learning. Major techniques used include look-see visits, role-playing, intercultural workshops, and simulations (Littrell & Salas, 2005). The main advantages of this training are it helps trainees develop the skills necessary for effective performance, for positive interaction with the locals in their host country, and for cognitive skills to make correct



attributions. Internationalization programs provide the hands-on learning experience that college students need to facilitate their becoming successful expatriates in the workplace as employees.

The students that participated in the study met all the recommendations that Bennett et al. (2000) and Ko and Yang (2011) put forth, thereby enhancing their participation in internationalization programs and preparing them to be successful expatriates upon completion of their post-secondary studies. During the study, students specified that they attended many meetings, orientations, and cultural immersion sessions to prepare them for success in their internationalization program. Most of the students communicated that these orientations were quite helpful and that they were responsive to the information. One student communicated that although helpful, the volume of the information to be assimilated was overwhelming. Specificity related to how the students met the recommendations was described in Chapter 4.

McCabe (2005) indicated that college, in general, can be a stressful environment for young people, particularly as they move from home to independence. Moreover, the transition to studying or working abroad adds another layer of stress. Additionally, the perception that the world in general has become less safe raises another set of anxieties for college students going abroad. One of the underrepresented students in this study cited this as a concern he had about participating in an international internship. After careful thought, he decided to participate. McCabe also stated that other issues that make college life more complex than in the past include advances in technology, pressures related to social media, and preparation for a competitive global labor market. These issues seem to prime students to experience heightened degrees of stress. The highest level of stress that the students in this study experienced was associated with instances of competition and feelings associated with being in competition in class and at work. The main areas where they expressed concerns were also connected to classes and work—areas

that prepare them for an international labor market. Many of the students reported feelings of inadequacy and intimidation that led to feelings of stress.

Dongfeng (2012) cited five stressful factors for students participating in internationalization programs. The first of the five stressful factors are that of loss and separation, which occurs when college students are in countries away from family, friends, and other support systems. When this occurs for the first time, the separation becomes much more pronounced and may produce feelings of stress from loss. For the underrepresented college student populations, many students going abroad represent the first real separation from family and friends. The second factor is that of travel, in that traveling to and from countries can produce a significant amount of stress. Navigating from place to place in strange territory is now compounded by a world that is increasingly sensitive to terrorism and other politically volatile situations. This has resulted in enhanced security screenings and passport and visa controls, which can produce tremendous stress. In addition, significant changes in time, climate, and daylight can dramatically interfere with a traveler's sleep patterns, which can be stressful. The third factor is culture shock, which occurs when college students from the United States face increasing uncertainty as to how they will be received by host nationals. Dongfeng asserted that confronting new and unfamiliar cultures is stressful, and that culture shock demonstrates the need to modify behavior adequately to regain positive reinforcement from the new environment.

The fourth factor consists of adjusting to local conditions, wherein individuals can experience stress by adjusting to the differences in living situations in another country including differences in housing, food, and water. This is especially true in under developed countries, which can tax the sojourner mentally and physically with fatigue and difficulty concentrating. In addition, the country may lack the conveniences that an American college student is accustomed

to in their home country. Rigorous academic programs and work environments can also form stress-producing situations that exacerbate mental health and self-esteem issues. The final factor is social pressure, wherein college students must figure out what they want from their academic experiences. Going abroad for the first time is generally analogous to a college student's first-year experience. Many of the same feelings are generated, and all students feel pressure to quickly adjust to the social climate of their home country peers while simultaneously they are encouraged to integrate themselves into the host national community. Additionally, students are occupied with issues ranging from self-identity, pressure to succeed in the classroom, the workplace, cultural diversity, and other pressures that come with emancipation from home.

The students in this study experienced the five stressful factors cited. With respect to loss and separation, all the students began to feel homesick. Many defined homesick as missing family members, friends, and the living standards they were used to in the United States. They also indicated that they missed the support that they received from their loved ones. The students had some stress around travel, particularly public transportation. The vehicles included buses and taxis, which were not as up to date as American public transportation vehicles. Lazarus and Folkman (1984) and Jorgenson and Shultz (2012) asserted that this is an area of international adjustment that required learning a new set of difficult skills. The students cited public transportation being difficult and sometimes more crowded than what they were used to in America. Some students expressed being jet lagged upon arriving at their host country from their long flights. The time changes also affected their sleep patterns. Some of the students expressed the traveling from city to city within a country as stressful, even though they were accompanied by a mentor.

There were several cultural differences that caused the students culture shock. All the students expressed the desire to be accepted by the host nationals; several of them so much so that if the locals of the country had a cultural difference of opinion or viewpoint, the students made every effort to be respectful. They indicated that they modified their behavior by avoiding conflict at all costs because they did not want to be perceived as rude. They felt that they had responsibilities either in the classroom or in the workplace in another country and they wished to keep the environment positive.

There were several local conditions that the students could adjust to without much difficulty. These included housing, the sleep environment, and water. During their orientation sessions, they were informed about the simple living conditions in their host countries. They mentioned that there was always a large supply of bottled spring water. They also realized that not all countries sleep on plush, bouncy mattresses and box springs. Though the mattresses were harder than they were used to, they were able to adjust.

The most difficult adjustment the students had to make included the rigorous academic programs and work environments in some of the countries. This was especially true when they felt in competition with foreign students from other countries. The students indicated that this was quite stress inducing and did exacerbate some self-esteem issues. The issue of social pressure was also centered around academic programs and the work environment. They expressed feeling very much in competition in these areas and stated that they knew they needed these experiences because they would ultimately prepare them for the workforce upon graduation.

This group of students was quite mature, were open to new experiences, and possessed an openness to diversity. Basow and Gaugler (2017) tested a partially mediated model of the

relationship between multicultural personality factors and students' sociocultural adjustment. It was found that language proficiency and social interactions with locals were most important for sociocultural adjustment (Basow & Gaugler, 2017). Another finding that contributes to the existing body of literature includes underrepresented faculty. Several underrepresented students indicated that they were influenced to participate in an internationalization program by an underrepresented faculty member. The faculty were either minority or female faculty in a male dominated major. Lu (2016) and Morris (2016) cited that faculty play an important role in encouraging students to study and work abroad, and can influence many students. If post-secondary institutions want to increase the numbers of students that participate in internationalization programs, particularly underrepresented students, underrepresented faculty should be part of the recruitment process (Lu, 2016; Morris, 2016).

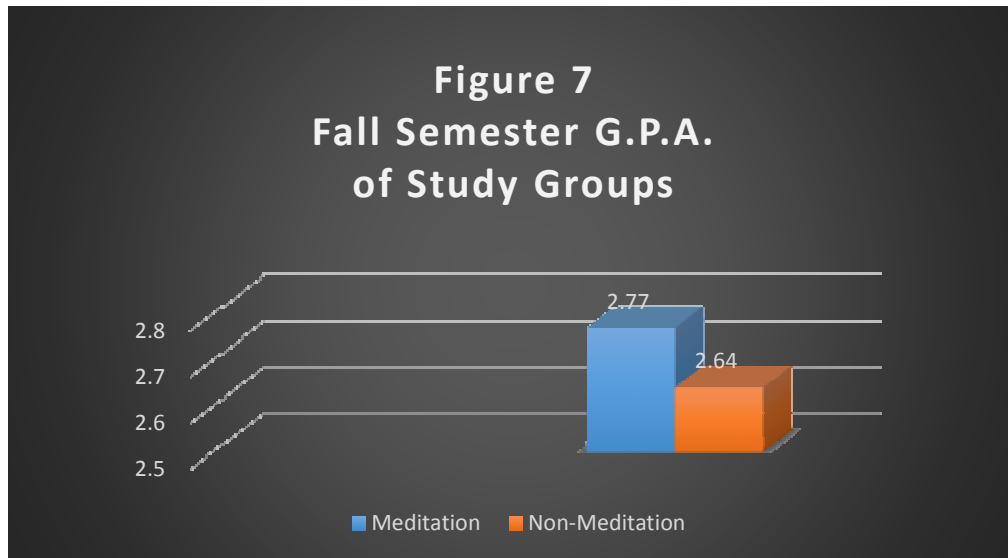
During the past 2 decades, an increasing number of scholars and practitioners have explored various ways that mindfulness meditation can benefit people at work, in the pursuit of college degrees and in their personal lives (Haghamed, 2016). Meditation was first researched by scientists in the 1930s. Breathing patterns, heartbeat and oxygen consumption were shown to be affected by meditation. More findings were discovered as the research instruments became more sophisticated (Chadda, 2017). A growing body of empirical research indicates that mindfulness meditation can decrease stress, increase mental and physical health and cognitive functioning, and improve performance and well-being (Corliss, 2014). Thus, organizations have started to implement mindfulness programs for their employees (Lomas, Ivtzan, & Fu, 2015). More work is needed to clarify definitions and assessments; to explore results, and develop and evaluate the impact of mindfulness interventions and programs in educational and work settings.

Three of the students in this study regularly practice individual forms of meditation for stress management purposes. Shapiro et al. (2005) specified that the participants who benefit from this intervention experience less stress, distress, fatigue, and compassion. The students who participated in the study and practiced meditation indicated the same results. One student was very specific about the compassion he began to feel for the people in his workplace that he initially found annoying. One of the main issues he found stressful and annoying included the negative attitudes towards the elderly patients in the hospital where he worked. He indicated that these attitudes seemed to contribute to poor care delivery, dismissive actions and patronizing language. These stressful issues are also cited by scholars in other countries (Dingwall, Fenton, Kelly, & Lee, 2017). Schwind et al. (2017) stated that students in higher education experience so much stress and anxiety that it impedes their academic success and personal well-being. Additionally, brief mindfulness meditation and loving-kindness meditation are two aspects of mindfulness practice that have the potential to decrease rumination and worry, both of which maintain feelings of anxiety and stress (Schwind et al., 2017). Students who practice meditation have the potential to increase their sense of well-being and capacity for compassion for self and for others (Schwind et al., 2017). Within the current study, the three students who practiced their meditation techniques indicated that they remained more focused. Each of these students received an A+ as their final grade for their program participation. The remaining students received grades ranging between A's and B's.

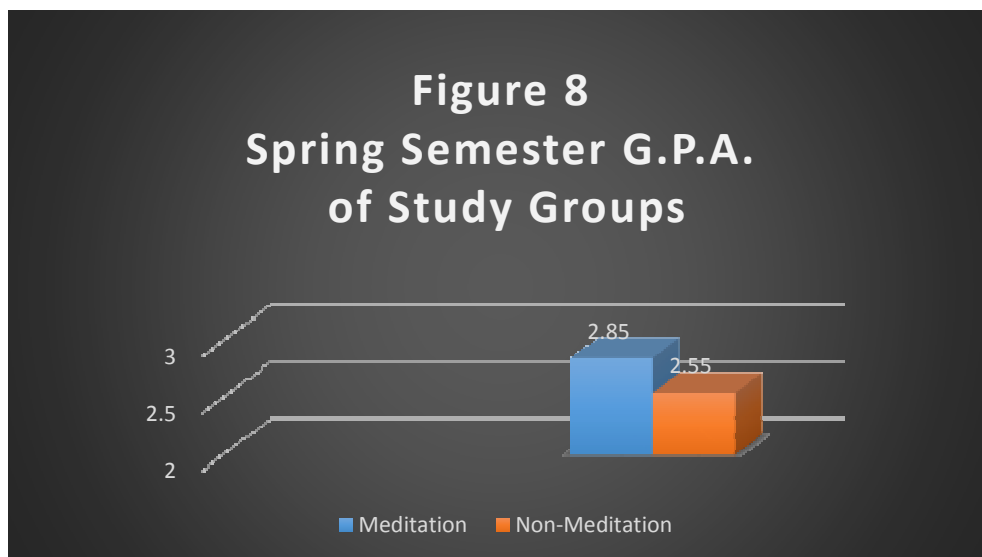
An urban university experimented with 52 undergraduate and graduate students in different academic majors at UCLA. It would be determined how the 8-week period would affect the brains and immune systems of the individuals. Faculty directed brief mindfulness meditation practices over an eight-week period at the beginning and end of classes. Students were asked to

also engage in the individual home practice of five to fifteen minutes of meditation four to five times a week. At the end of the term, feedback was elicited from the participating students. Six of seven faculty who guided the mindfulness practices shared the students' experiences from the activities. Students reported an increased sense of calm, self-control, clarity and a decreased feeling of anxiety. The faculty also observed that the brief mindful breathing practice at the start of class helped students become more grounded and focused before engaging in the demands of the course content (Flaxman & Flook, 2008). Challenges encountered focused on the need to provide more accurate information about mindfulness, as it relates to higher education teaching-learning contexts, to both students and participating faculty. Kabat-Zinn (1997) suggested that mindfulness meditation can calm the mind, facilitate focus, and aid in concentration. On the physical level, mindfulness meditation also has the potential to increase immune system functioning and restore the body's nervous system (Hamilton et al., 2006).

Hall (1999) similarly found that the benefits of meditation did not extend solely to mental and physical health, but were also beneficial to grades and GPA, as well. Hall addressed the effect of meditation on the students' academic performance for two full semesters at Hampton University. Hall worked with 56 undergraduate students. Half of the students were assigned to a meditation group and half were assigned to a non-meditation group. It was discovered that there was a difference in the meditation group versus the non-meditation group. The semester GPAs of the meditation group were significantly higher than the control group, as were the cumulative GPAs (see Figures 7 and 8). In Figure 7, the mean scores for the meditation group and the control group for the first semester were 2.77 and 2.64, respectively. In Figure 8, the mean scores for the meditation group and control group for the second semester were 2.85 and 2.55, respectively. The mode for the meditation groups and non-meditation groups is 2.55.



*Figure 7. Fall Semester G.P.A. of Study Groups. Adapted from “The Effect of Meditation on the Academic Performance of African-American College Students,” by P. D. Hall, 1999, *Journal of Black Studies*, 29(408), 408–415.*

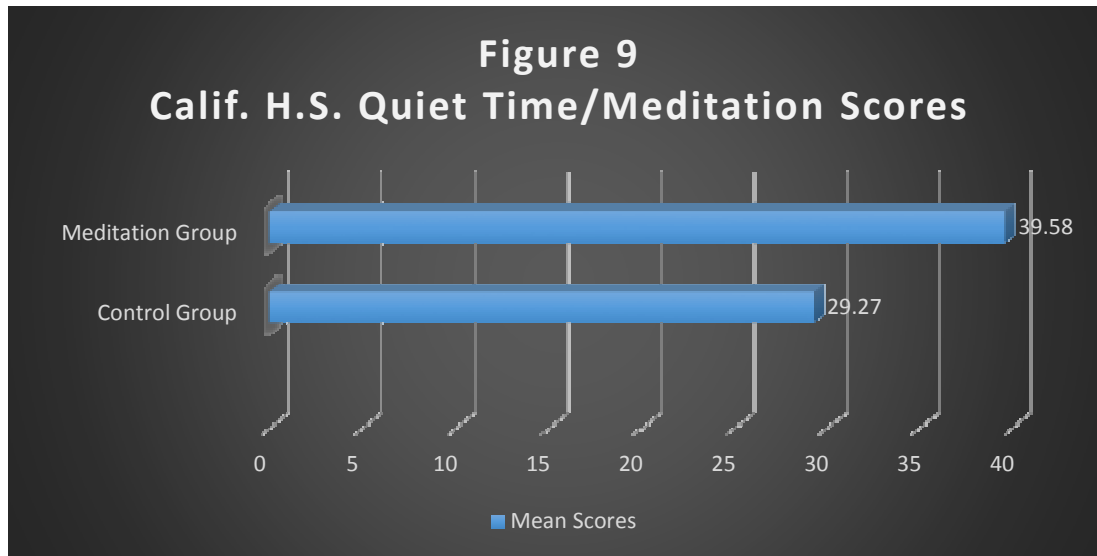


*Figure 8. Spring Semester G.P.A. of Study Groups. Adapted from “The Effect of Meditation on the Academic Performance of African-American College Students,” by P. D. Hall, 1999, *Journal of Black Studies*, 29(408), 408–415.*

A study was conducted at a California high school in the San Francisco Unified School District with at-risk seniors preparing for college and preparing to take a standardized test. One



hundred students were divided into two groups of 50 each. They included the meditating and a control group. The students were given a pre-test before the study began. Meditating students studied and practiced Transcendental Meditation through the school's Quiet Time/Meditation Program for two periods of 15 minutes a day at the beginning and the end of the school day for three months prior to the proctoring of the posttest in addition to studying. The control group of students studied for the test for three months and nothing more. Results showed a gain in math of at least one performance level for 40.7% of the meditating students and only 15% of the control group. For English, 36.8% of the meditating students exhibited a gain of at least one performance level compared to 17.2% of the control group. Meditating students exhibited an increase in the composite academic achievement scores while the control group showed a decrease in the composite scale scores. The mean scores for the meditation group and non-meditation group after the post-test was given were 39.58 and 29.27, respectively. The median scores for the meditation group and non-meditation group were 43.50 and 34.37, respectively (see Figure 9; Dierke, 2017).

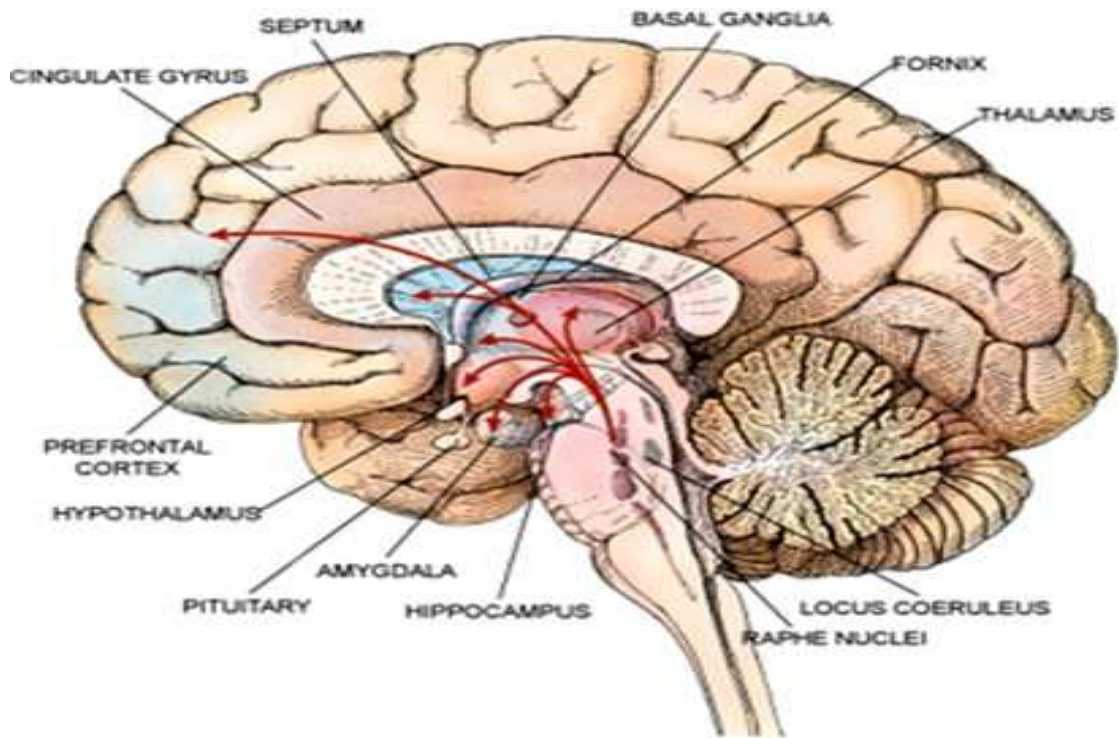


*Figure 9. Quiet Time/Meditation Scores of Students. Adapted from “The Quiet Time Program: Improving Academic Performance and Reducing Stress and Violence,” by J. S. Dierke, 2017, David Lynch Foundation, 1.*

Per Kabat-Zinn (2003), people who meditate regularly experience positive effects. Most meditators report feeling an increase in positive emotion, stress reduction, improved attention, better memory, less anxiety, greater mental clarity and focus, and a feeling of connectedness to the present moment (Kabat-Zinn, 2003). Studies from neuroscientists have revealed many interesting neurological changes that occur with a long-term meditation practice. One important structure that is influenced by consistent meditation practice is the amygdala. The amygdala is an almond-shaped mass of gray matter in the brain. It is in the front part of the temporal lobe of the cerebrum that is part of the limbic system. The amygdala is involved in processing and expressing negative emotions, detecting anger, threat, and fear-learning. It links the areas of the cerebral cortex that process cognitive information with hypothalamic and brainstem systems that control metabolic responses (e.g., touch, pain sensitivity, and respiration). This allows the amygdala to coordinate physiological responses in the body based on cognitive information

processed in the brain (Gregoire, 2014). In other words, the amygdala acts like a bridge between the brain and the body, especially in times of perceived stress. When the amygdala is activated it gears the body up for the fight-or-flight response (Benson, 2014). Researchers have found that long-term practitioners of meditation show less activity in the amygdala. The mind becomes less submissive to the emotions, and can exercise greater control over them. This leads to less physiological arousal related to stress (Kabat-Zinn & Davidson, 2011).

Kabat-Zinn and Davidson (2011) stressed that reduced activity in the amygdala does not occur only during a meditation session, but is a persistent pattern in people who practice meditation daily. The way the brain responds to stress is changed by the meditation practice. Quieter amygdalae may mean the meditator has less frequent feelings of anxiety, less reactivity to stressful events, more stable, positive moods, and a general feeling of calmness (Kabat-Zinn & Davidson, 2011). Long-term consistent meditators experience more activity in the region of the prefrontal cortex that is responsible for emotional regulation; this increased activity is what tells the amygdala to calm down (Kabat-Zinn & Davidson, 2011). The prefrontal cortex is also responsible for performing executive functions such as planning, decision making, judgement, and problem solving (see Figure 10). Dunn (2016a) indicated that regular meditators get boosts of serotonin, dopamine, endorphins and norepinephrine; the quartet of neurotransmitters linked to positive moods. Dunn (2016b) also cited that meditation regularity facilitates drops in blood pressure, the rebooting of the parasympathetic nervous system, which helps digestion run more smoothly, the strengthening of the immune system and the reduction of cortisol levels and inflammatory responses.

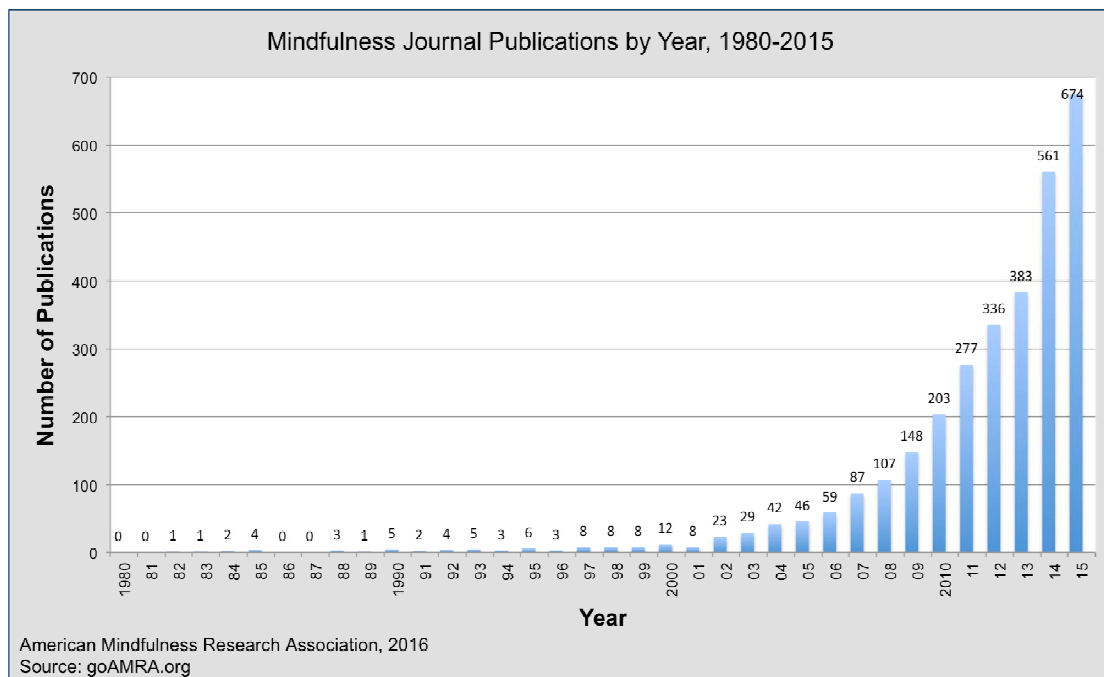


*Figure 10.* The Brain. Adapted from “The Brain,” by Wellesley College, 1998.  
Retrieved from <http://academics.wellesley.edu/Chemistry/Chem102/brain/brain.htm>.

Long-term meditators also show high levels of gamma waves in the brain, especially in the prefrontal cortex (Kabat-Zinn & Davidson, 2011). Gamma waves are high frequency brain waves that are associated with active thought, learning, memory, and intelligence. In meditators, these waves show increased levels and speed of synchronization across neurons, suggesting that the brain cells are working together more efficiently (Ricard, Lutz, & Davidson, 2014). This improved neural synchronization results in more effective communication of information, resulting in greater mental focus and clarity for the meditator (Kabat-Zinn & Davidson, 2011).

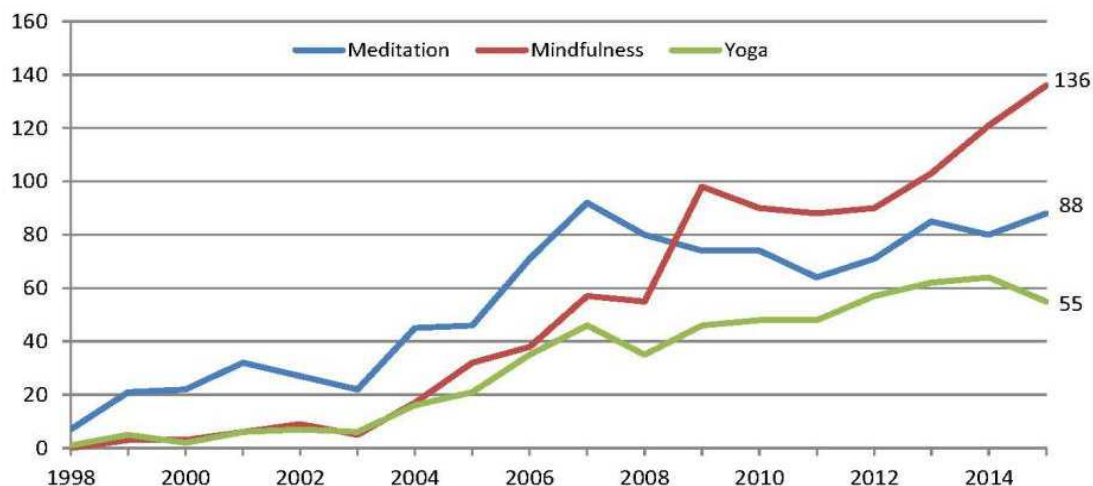
The past 30 years have seen exponential growth in research examining Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) and a variety of spin-offs termed Mindfulness-Based Interventions (MBIs; Cullen, 2011). The Mindfulness Research Guide, presents a comprehensive overview of this burgeoning science, including a graph (Figure 11) demonstrating the growth in

mindfulness research literature from 1980-2015. Research on the topic has grown, as researchers see both potential utility in the simple act of mindfulness.



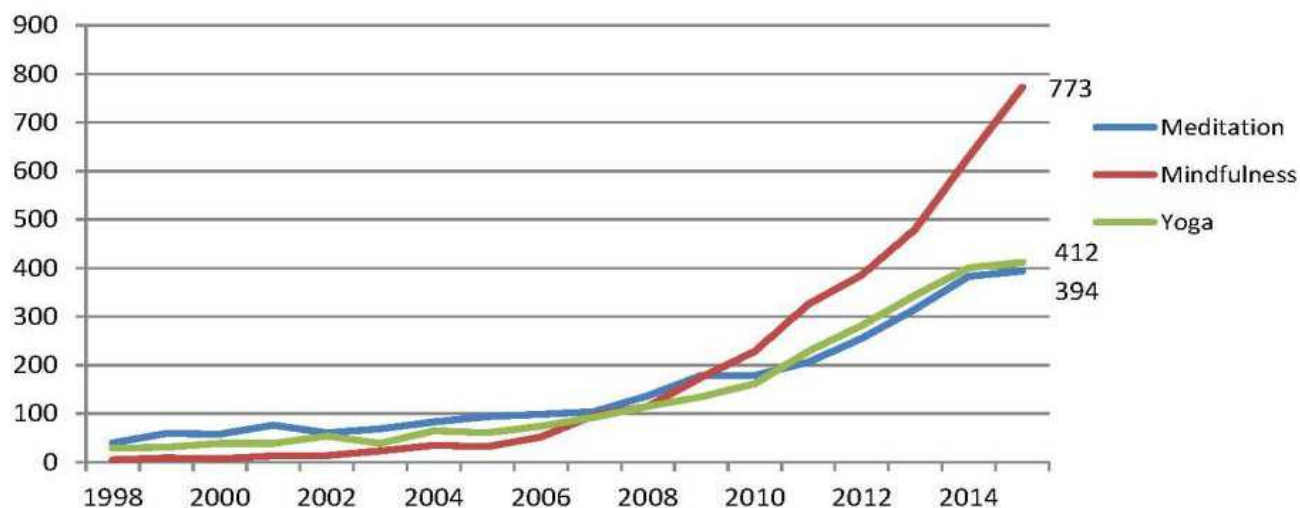
*Figure 11.* Mindfulness Research Chart 1980–2015. Adapted from “Mindfulness Journal Publications by Year, 1980-2015,” by American Mindfulness Research Association, 2016. Retrieved from <https://goamra.org/resources/>.

Additionally, proposals have been funded with grants for further research on meditation and all of its effects. Many peer-reviewed articles have also been published in scholarly journals on the effects of meditation. Figure 12 presents the number of grants awarded by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) from 1998 through 2014 for studies related to yoga, mindfulness, and meditation. The NIH is a biomedical research facility located in Bethesda, Maryland. It is the primary medical research establishment of the United States government that is responsible for biomedical and health-related research.



*Figure 12.* NIH-Funded Studies for Yoga, Mindfulness, and Meditation. Adapted from “Contemplative Mind in Life: A Global Collection of Mindfulness and Meditation Research Resources,” by PubMed, 2014. Retrieved from <https://contemplativemind.wordpress.com/mindfulness-meditation-contemplative-practice/>.

Figure 13 presents the number of peer-reviewed publications on the subjects of yoga, mindfulness and meditation, from 1998 through 2014. It is referenced by PubMed, a division of the U.S. National Library of Medicine and the National Institutes of Health.



*Figure 13.* Peer Reviewed Publications on Yoga, Mindfulness, and Meditation. Adapted from “Contemplative Mind in Life: A Global Collection of Mindfulness and Meditation

Research Resources,” by PubMed, 2014. Retrieved from <https://contemplativemind.wordpress.com/mindfulness-meditation-contemplative-practice/>.

One of the goals of internationalization programs is to groom future global business leaders toward becoming interculturally competent throughout their careers. Developing intercultural competence and cross cultural adjustment skills are a challenge. Singh (1989) stated that in the present scientific age, distance and space are losing their significance quickly, and efforts are being made to establish interplanetary contacts. Internationalization programs provide students with a hands-on experience, awareness, and a platform to understand and develop the critical skills for communicating and interacting across cultures. Singh continues by indicating that the various countries of the world are housing different nations, distinguished from one another by geographic, climatic, and historical conditions, facial contours and complexions, languages and dialects, diet, apparel, and modes of worship. He concludes by stating that all people conditioned by these divergent factors form the great organic whole called humanity. These studies provide an excellent beginning for examining new techniques such as mindfulness meditation, related to improving academic and work performance and preparing college students for an international workplace by reducing stress for them.

## **5.2. Findings Relating to Theoretical Frameworks**

The stages of the U-curve and W-curve do not apply to everyone, as the length and degree of each stage varies by individual. When an individual studies and works cross-culturally, productivity won't occur immediately. A period of learning about that culture's traditions, values, and social norms is necessary first. Following extensive empirical work on the U-curve theory initiated by Lysgaard (1955), the U-curve framework has been widely used to describe the cross-cultural adjustment process of international sojourners within a host culture.

The U-curve theory relates the time path of adjustment to a host country's culture (see Figure 14). It initially involves the honeymoon stage, followed by culture shock and then a process of improvement or adjustment to the host culture, eventually evolving to the mastery stage. The mastery stage is characterized by small incremental increases in the sojourner's ability to function effectively and behave appropriately. The degree of adjustment is measured not by conformity to the host country's culture, but in terms of variables such as attitudes and growth with the new environment, degree of contact with host nationals, or issues with aspects of the new foreign environment (Black & Mendenhall, 1990).



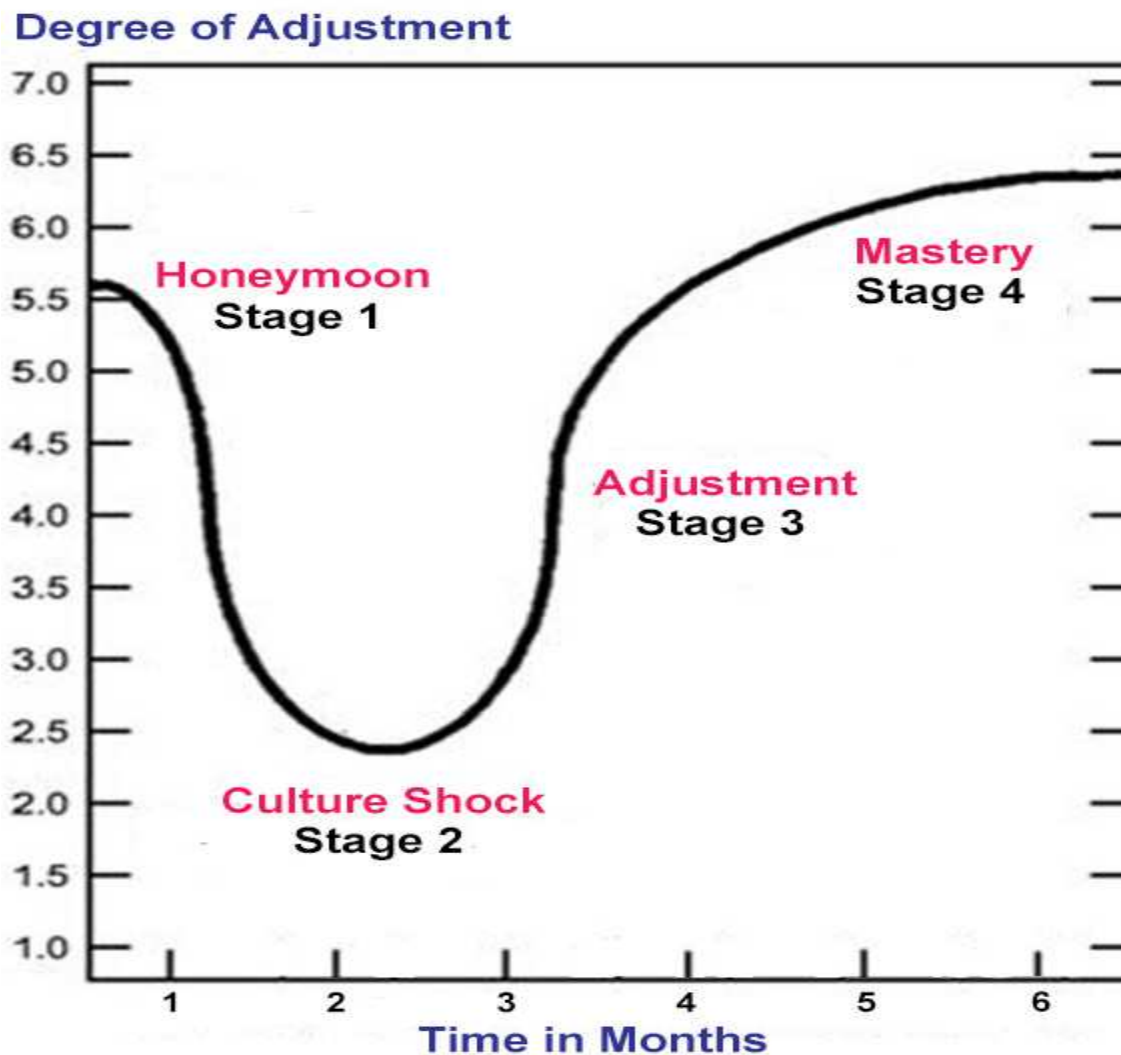


Figure 14. U Curve Framework Chart (Lysgaard, 1955). Adapted from the Cambridge Handbook of Acculturation Psychology, April, 2006.

All the students in this study experienced the stages of the U-curve framework by Lysgaard (1955). They experienced initially a cultural infatuation with their host countries. This was caused by the newness of the environment, the cultural differences in the way things were

done in their host country, as well as learning the country's and the city's history, seeing historic buildings, and other sights upon arrival. Most of the students expressed excitement about the possibility of living, studying and working abroad. None of them seemed overwhelmed by the differences initially.

Culture shock began to set in when the students began studying and working in the new environment daily. Eventually, the students spoke about what they observed around them regarding the differences in culture. All of them found the extreme poverty distressing and they mentioned that it was a major challenge for them to adjust. Other major challenges included adjusting to viewpoints of other cultures, traveling, gender roles, electricity, and climate that affected work performance. The biggest culture shock and challenge to the students was the competition they felt in the classroom and the workplace. One of the students received tutorial assistance in a subject and experienced a language barrier with the tutor as well as a different teaching style than he was used to in America, experiencing academic and social shock, as mentioned in Chapter I (Sovic, 2008). Unlike Lysgaard's (1955) study, during the culture shock stage, the need for students to have personal involvement with friends, roommates, co-workers and classmates was present. When the students did meet conflict between themselves and the host country office they could analyze the specific power structures and hierarchy and together they approached the appropriate people to resolve the issue, like McCabe's (2004) approach on conflict that might arise abroad. Therefore, there was no stress due to loneliness and they could jointly focus on solving the problems they encountered.

An adjustment stage began eventually by an increasing degree of being able to cope with the cultural norms of the host country. This had nothing to do with agreement with all the host country's viewpoints and cultural norms, but being better able to function effectively within the

country. The students also indicated that they reminded themselves of the reasons they were there in the first place.

During the acceptance or mastery stage the students became more integrated into their host country, the friends they made, roommates, co-workers and classmates. They began to feel more like members of a community and not as isolated. This aspect of the students' experiences did not seem to vary much in methodological rigor. The students as individuals became clear of which behaviors were inappropriate and different and appropriate behavior was modeled.

This study combined interview and survey data of 10 returning undergraduate college students. The results suggest that the reverse culture shock pattern of adjustment that the students experienced upon returning home is very much like the W-curve framework of adjustment introduced by Gullahorn and Gullahorn (1963). The students in this study experienced the stages of the W-curve framework by Gullahorn and Gullahorn (see Figure 15). The students returned home finding they were somewhat out of step with their own culture. The W-curve or reverse culture shock is the readjustment and acculturation process of returning home after having been overseas and living in a different culture for a lengthy period.

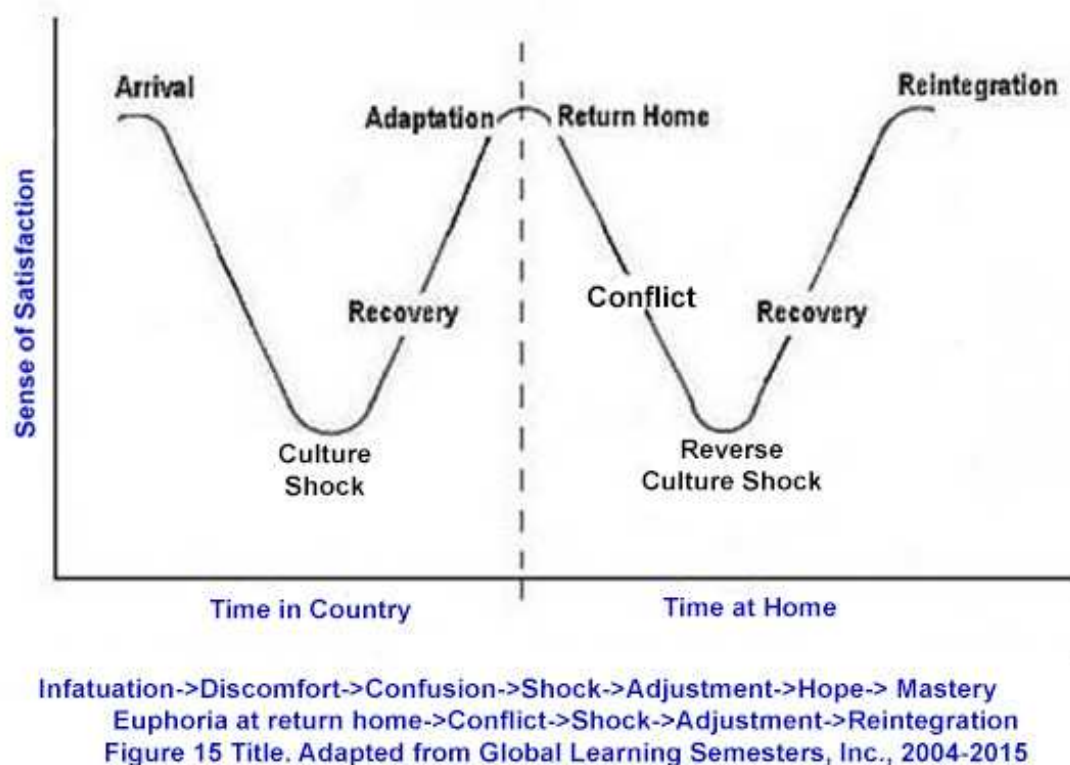


Figure 15. W Curve Framework Chart (Gullahorn & Gullahorn, 1963).

Some of the students formed close bonds with the local students in their host country while they resided overseas and felt that leaving them to return home would be difficult. Additionally, they were excited about returning home to be removed from the poverty that they observed daily and seeing their family and friends. Several of the female students expressed being excited to return to a country whose predominant socialization pattern was not as masculine as their host country and where more opportunities for females exist (Hofstede, 1980). This was especially true of the female students majoring in male-dominated majors that had incurred communication issues with males in their host country, particularly the S.T.E.M. major. Miles et al. (2013) discussed this as being a normal part of doing business in a country that is so male socialized. Upon returning home, two students felt out of place trying to reconcile the

poverty they witnessed overseas and recognizing the privileges, they experience living in the United States. One of those students came from a very affluent background with highly educated parents, had been overseas many times and returned with a strong sense of gratitude.

Eight of the students assumed the return home would be a positive experience. They expected to return to an unchanged home environment as unchanged people, which was not the case (Eschbach, Parker, & Stoeberl, 2001). These students described problematic value conflicts with social and interpersonal relationships as well as with employment roles. This aspect of the students' experiences also did not seem to vary much in methodological rigor. Only two students had little trouble with the readjustment to returning home. However, they also reported being profoundly affected by their experiences. Several of the students cited their return and re-acculturation as severe. Initially, all of the students were excited to return home to their families and leave the poverty of their host countries. Eventually, most of the students experienced conflict with those close to them. They found that they had little patience for the complaints of others and felt they were complaining about things that were insignificant. One student felt the need to use a meditation stress reduction technique to be able to deal with some of his adjustment and reverse culture shock. He specified that it was very effective in assisting him with coping with the adjustment. The students also developed a more critical attitude toward their home country upon returning home and listening to complaints. The adjustment stage of being back in the United States began eventually by an increasing degree of being able to cope with family members, their acquaintances, significant others, employers, friends and extended family members. At the acceptance stage, the students were able to become more adjusted to their return home and to their individual routines. Several of the students said that they were still processing the entire experience and that it would be an ongoing process for them.

### **5.3. Limitations of the Study**

There were several limitations to the present study. Limitations included that there was a small group of students that participated. Furthermore, the study consisted of students from only one large state university in northeast Ohio. Additionally, there was one group of students that participated in the study, rather than an experimental group and a control group. Initially, 20 college undergraduate and graduate students participated in the study, wherein they first took part in a pilot study (National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research, 1979). These students participated in internationalization programs in underdeveloped countries as well as economically advanced countries (see Table 5.1). In the initial surveying and interviewing of the 20 students, it was difficult to measure specifically for acculturative stress and stress management data that proved to be most effective. Therefore, it became necessary to select a sample of 10 undergraduate students that participated in internationalization programs in Third World countries (see Table 5.2).

### **5.4. Implications for Professional Practice**

Living, working, and studying in a culture different from one's own is likely to increase cultural competency. Therefore, college administrators and other university professionals should be cognizant of the positive and negative effects of internationalization programs. Based on this study, major concerns include the impact that stress management could have on college students before participation in an internationalization program and prior to their return home. There were three issues that were most stressful for this group of students. They included the competition they experienced from foreign students in the classroom and the workplace, the initial culture shock upon arrival to their host country and their experiences and challenges in returning to their home country, which initially they viewed in a more negative light than when they departed.

Implications for education suggests further research that includes fuller experiential training of higher education professionals, as well as providing a wide range background on meditation as a stress management tool for the students.

Encouraging returning students to participate in focus groups upon their return home could possibly be helpful. A focus group could entail presentations from former students on the positive and negative effects experienced by them as returning sojourners. The students can be asked if they had similar experiences. Afterward, ideas can be discussed and shared for dealing with these issues.

### **5.5. Recommendations for Further Research**

An option to conduct a study of this nature could include using a very large number of college students, perhaps at least 100. The students could include graduate and undergraduate students in internationalization programs in developed countries as well as Third World Countries. By using many students, vast amounts of data could be collected. Comparisons could be made of the students' responses by the geographical settings, gender, racial backgrounds, age ranges, socioeconomic status, undergraduate vs. graduate students, and major courses of study.

By using many students, the study could also be conducted at several types of colleges such as state universities, private colleges, liberal arts colleges, single sex colleges, religious colleges, HBCUs, and private Ivy League universities. Comparisons could include how the students responded from the different types of post-secondary institutions. Future research could consider examining additional sources of support such as classmates, coworkers, friends outside of the university, and subordinates. Future research could also be done on the possibility of implementing reentry programs to facilitate re-entry adjustment issues upon the student's return from abroad. Several of the students in this study indicated that they experienced a difficult re-

entry. Some students may experience problems serious enough to warrant referral to personal counseling. Evidence from this study suggests that low-income and first-generation college students may be more likely to experience such difficulties than other college students. More than likely these students may be experiencing traveling internationally for the first time.

Additionally, another option would be to have two groups of students participate in a study of this nature. The experimental group could practice meditation regularly as a stress management tool during their internationalization programs. The control group could participate in the study by not being given the intervention of stress management. At the end of the internationalization programs, the two groups can be compared to determine if the regular practice of meditation positively influenced their management of stress and their program performance. There is also a paucity of research about the role discrimination plays on the acculturative stress experiences of underrepresented college students and what stress management techniques would be effective to reduce this stress. Further research is also needed on the impact of stress management on overseas effectiveness for expatriates as well as college students in internationalization programs. Health records and attrition information could be gathered on the sojourners receiving stress management interventions before and after going overseas to determine their effectiveness. Information could also be collected on student status in college and geographical settings.

The scientific research study of meditation is in its embryonic stage. Therefore, studies have been more descriptive of the phenomenon rather than definitive demonstrations of efficacy (Kabat-Zinn, 2003). Evidence has accumulated to warrant the development of more methodologically rigorous research. Research has also been limited on what can be done to reduce acculturative stress for college students and employees as expatriates.



## **5.6. Summary**

In conclusion, this study suggests that it is important for college students to possess multinational leadership skills and experience upon graduation. As such, it highlights the need for them to become involved in internationalization and stress management programs. The adjustments the students will need to make include culture shock, international competition in the classroom and in the workplace and reverse culture shock upon their return home. This could possibly improve the success rate of American expatriates as well.

Additionally, cultural and geographic differences can be difficult and very stressful to assimilate. Culture is defined as the set of human knowledge, beliefs, and behaviors, shared by a group of people that facilitate the regulation of their daily living. Perhaps college students who participate in internationalization programs could be given a mindfulness meditation training before leaving to reduce the stress from competition and culture shock. They could also be given training upon returning home to more effectively manage reverse culture shock.

This study has contributed to the existing knowledge base by providing insight about undergraduate college students who participated in internationalization programs in Third World countries and how they managed the stress they encountered. Internationalization in higher education will continue worldwide. A multitude of research substantiates the positive effect that participation in these programs has on college students' acculturative stress, intercultural competency and development. There are unique learning challenges that college students experience in programs located in Third World countries, with the potential opportunity to give back. These experiences provide reasons for the expansion of internationalization programs for more American college students so that they may gain multinational leadership skills and become effective global business leaders in American society.

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## APPENDIX A: STRESS ASSESSMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

### Questionnaire for Students in Internationalization Programs

#### I. Demographic Information

- 1) What is your age? \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) What is your gender? Check your answer. \_\_\_\_\_ Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female
- 3) What is your ethnicity? (Check all that apply) \_\_\_\_\_ Caucasian \_\_\_\_\_  
African-American \_\_\_\_\_ Hispanic \_\_\_\_\_ Native-American \_\_\_\_\_ Asian \_\_\_\_\_ Other,  
(Specify) \_\_\_\_\_
- 4) Do either of your parents have a Bachelor's Degree? If so, which parent(s)? \_\_\_\_\_  
What are you majoring in? \_\_\_\_\_  
Did you take on a minor? If so, what is your minor? \_\_\_\_\_
- 5) Where did you go on your international program? How long were you away?  
How long have you been back? \_\_\_\_\_
- 6) How often have you traveled nationally (within the United States) before taking  
this trip? \_\_\_\_\_
- 7) When was the last time you traveled nationally? \_\_\_\_\_  
Specify where. \_\_\_\_\_
- 8) How often have you traveled internationally (outside the United States) before  
taking this trip? \_\_\_\_\_
- 9) When was your last international trip taken? \_\_\_\_\_  
Where did you go? \_\_\_\_\_



## II. Stressors

Stress is the body and the mind's reaction to a change or a problem that causes mental tension and worry.

- 10) What did you find to be the most stressful for you during your international work/study experience? \_\_\_\_\_
- 11) What was the process like for you leading up to this experience abroad?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 12) How did you manage any issues that you experienced abroad?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 13) How would you describe your international experience?  
\_\_\_\_\_.
- 14) Compare and contrast what you anticipated and what you experienced abroad?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 15) How satisfied were you with your international program? \_\_\_\_\_
- 16) What did you like the best about this experience? Why? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 17) What did you like least about this experience? Why? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**In the following questions, please explain your answers when appropriate.**

- 18) Did you experience stress when you were interacting with students/employees of a different cultural background where you lived or studied? If so, please explain.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 19) Did you experience stress when you were interacting with students/employees of a

different cultural background in your workplace or in the classroom? If so, please explain. \_\_\_\_\_

- 20) Did you experience stress when you were interacting with students/employees of a different cultural background in social activities? If so, please explain.

\_\_\_\_\_

- 21) Did you experience stress when you were interacting with students/employees of a different cultural background in other activities? If so, please explain.

\_\_\_\_\_

- 22) How likely are you to recommend international programs to other students?

\_\_\_\_\_

### **III. Expectations/Student Learning**

- 23) What kind of work did you do? Or what did you study? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

- 24) Describe the teaching/training style there. How does it compare with the style here? \_\_\_\_\_

- 25) How did your experience in the classroom/training (if applicable) impact your learning? \_\_\_\_\_

- 26) What did you know about the country where you worked/studied and its culture before you went there? Specify facts. \_\_\_\_\_

- 26a.) How did your experience impact your views about people of other cultures?

\_\_\_\_\_

- 27) What is your greatest benefit that you can identify from your international internship/or study abroad program? What prompted your participation in this

program? \_\_\_\_\_

28) Would you like to participate in another international program?

\_\_\_\_\_Yes \_\_\_\_\_No

29) If so, where would you like to go, what would you like to study and/or what kind of work would you like to do? \_\_\_\_\_

30) What are your final comments about your international experience? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

31) Tell me about the structure of your assignments. What was your grade? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

#### IV. Repatriation Information (Likert Scale)

Strongly Agree      Strongly Disagree

32) I expected to feel lonely and to have homesick feelings      1   2   3   4   5  
for the country I studied in/worked in when I returned  
to the United States.

33) I had trouble concentrating at school or at work.      1   2   3   4   5

34) I was more anxious and irritable as my return was      1   2   3   4   5  
getting closer.

35) It was difficult when I was about to return to the United  
States.      1   2   3   4   5

## **APPENDIX B: CULTURAL ADAPTATION INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

### **OVERSEAS ENTRY (Cross Cultural Adaptation Process)**

1. How did you feel when you first arrived in the country?
2. Tell me about your experience adapting to the new culture.
3. Describe your feelings about home while you were away.
4. How do you feel you were received by members of the new culture?
5. Describe your feelings managing your own cultural values with those of your host country.
6. Describe how you experienced things in the host country that were culturally different from your experiences at home.
7. Describe your personal process of adapting to the new culture.

### **OVERSEAS REENTRY (Adaptation Process upon the Return Home)**

1. How did you feel about returning home?
2. What was your experience as you prepared to return home? How did you feel about the process/experience?
3. Describe your experience in talking with the staff and/or instructors.
4. How would you describe your overall experience abroad?
5. Describe your process as you transitioned from abroad back home.
6. How did you personally change while abroad?
7. Have those changes carried out in your home life? After being fully reimmersed in home life, how do feel about your trip abroad?
8. Do you feel you have fully processed your experience abroad?
9. Prior to your departure, what did you think was expected of you?

10. What perceptions did you have about the host country before arriving and how did any of that change after experiencing the country.

## APPENDIX C: CONSENT FORM



### Application for Approval of Investigations

### Involving Human Subjects

### DELAWARE STATE UNIVERSITY

### Institutional Review Board – Human Subjects Protection Committee

### Please Read Carefully and Complete All Items

1. **Principal Investigator's Name:** Reneé T. Armstead

(Student, Faculty, Staff — Circle or Bold one.)

**Co-Investigator Name:**

N/A

(Student, Faculty, Staff — Circle or Bold one.)

**College:** College of Education, Health & Public Policy

**Department:** X (Educational Leadership (Doctorate))

**Phone:** 302-857-7170

2. **If you are a student, provide the following:**

**Faculty Sponsor:** Dr. Richard Phillips **Department:** Education

**Faculty Sponsor Phone:** 302-857-7569

**Is this your class research project/assignment?** Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No X

**Thesis?** Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No X

**Dissertation Research?** Yes X No \_\_\_\_\_

3. **Title of project:** The Effects of Stress Management on College Students'

Performance in Internationalization Programs

**APPENDIX D: CORRESPONDENCE FROM UNIVERSITY ADMINISTRATORS FOR  
STUDY PARTICIPATION**

04/21/16 at 4:39 PM

Dear Renéé:

Thank you for contacting us regarding your proposed study. The University IRB does not have regulatory oversight for studies that are conducted by investigators not presently affiliated with it. As such, you are not required to have written approval for your study from our IRB. Your study procedures abide by the ethical principles of the Belmont Report, and other applicable regulatory bodies. Therefore, formal review and approval for your study need only come from the institutional IRB with which you are currently affiliated.

Should you have additional questions, please let me know. Best of luck with your research!

Thank you.

Respectfully,

Director, Research Compliance

02/03/16 at 3:37 PM

Dear René,

Thank you for your email towards the students, listing all the details about your research request. This topic is very timely.

I have sent your request. I am sure you will receive some students. Please let me know if you need further help.

Best,

Assistant Director, Education Abroad

Office of Global Education



3/21/16

Hi Renee,

I hope you are having a good day. I was able to secure the interest of several students. Please find the list of them attached. Our other student did not confirm yet and is now on spring break. You're welcome for the other lists. I hope you will find them helpful to you and your research.

Please let me know if you have any questions. Also, my apologizes for the delay.

Thank you.

Director

McNair Scholars Program

3/16/16

Hi Ms. Armstead:

Enclosed are the other students that were on Spring Break and have now confirmed interest in the possible participation in your study.

Their names and emails are:

Thank you,

Project Operations Coordinator

McNair Scholars Program

To:

rta6226@sbcglobal.net

07/08/16 at 10:33 AM

Good Morning Ms. Armstead!

You're welcome for the list of students from this division, the Division of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion and the Upward Bound Offices about the students that completed the online surveys. Please call me regarding the interviews to be held on Thursday for this group of students. My cell number is ###-###-####.

Academic Coordinator, Upward Bound Math Science Bio-Scholars

2/9/16

Hello Renee,

I was emailing you about your dissertation study. I have a list of students who were abroad last summer to Ireland, Germany and Ghana. If you still need students to survey and to interview this office would be more than happy to help you out.

I know of several immediately. I will try to get their permission to send their contact information for you.

Thank you,

CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL & INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION

August 5, 2016

Dear Reneé,

Per our telephone conversation, please find below a list of the students who attended the program in Nicaragua. Please contact me if you need further information or assistance.

Coordinator,

Office of Experiential Education & Civic Engagement | National Student Exchange

University College

office: ###-###-####

direct: ###-###-####

## **APPENDIX E: CORRESPONDENCE TO STUDENTS IN REFERENCE TO STUDY PARTICIPATION**

2/1/16

Dear International Internship and Study Abroad Students:

I am a doctoral student majoring in Educational Leadership with concentration in Higher Education Administration. My career experience has been as a higher education administrator and I have also worked with international educational organizations. The purpose of the study is to measure stress management that college students experience or have experienced in international internships and study abroad programs as well as the stress that they may experience upon their return home. It will also be determined which of your stress management techniques prove most effective in stress reduction.

As a doctoral student, I am very familiar with anonymity, confidentiality and their centrality to ethical research practices. Once the data is collected from your responses, please be informed that there will be an anonymization of students so that none of you are identifiable to others. This again is ensuring your confidentiality.

I would like to get a mixture of students with respect to gender and ethnicity; such as Caucasian, any minority (African-American, Hispanic, Native American, and/or females pursuing male dominated majors). If you are interested in participating in this activity, please contact me at [RTA6226@sbcglobal.net](mailto:RTA6226@sbcglobal.net). Thank you.

Reneé T. Armstead

March 31, 2016

Dear McNair Scholars:

I was given your name by the Director of the McNair Scholars Program. I understand that you just returned from an experience from an education abroad trip. I want to know if you might be available to participate in a study I am doing for my doctoral degree. I am a doctoral student majoring in Educational Leadership with concentration in Higher Education Administration. The purpose of the study is to measure stress management that college students experience or have experienced in programs abroad as well as the stress they may encounter upon their return home. It will also be determined which of your stress management techniques prove most effective in stress reduction. I am looking for ten (10) undergraduate students in total to interview and with whom to administer a questionnaire.

As a doctoral student, I am very familiar with anonymity, confidentiality and their centrality to ethical research practices. Once the data is collected from your responses, please be informed that there will be an anonymization of students so that none of you are identifiable to others. This again is ensuring your confidentiality.

If you are interested in participating in this activity, please contact me at RTA6226@sbcglobal.net as soon as possible. I am working with the Director to begin working with the students very soon. Thank you.

Reneé T. Armstead

3/9/16

Dear Students:

I was referred to you by the Division of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion and the Upward Bound Offices. I understand that you just returned from a Study Abroad program. Might you be available to participate in a study I am doing for my doctoral degree? I am majoring in Educational Leadership with concentration in Higher Education Administration. The purpose of the study is to measure stress management that college students experience or have experienced in programs abroad as well as upon their return home. It will also be determined which of your stress management techniques prove most effective in stress reduction. I am looking for ten (10) undergraduate students in total; a combination of all races, genders, and socioeconomic levels to interview and with whom to administer a survey.

As a doctoral student, I am very familiar with anonymity, confidentiality and their centrality to ethical research practices. Once the data is collected from your responses, please be informed that there will be an anonymization of students so that none of you are identifiable to others. This again is ensuring your confidentiality.

If you are interested in participating in this activity you may contact me at RTA6226@sbcglobal.net as soon as possible. I am preparing to work with the students very soon. Thank you.

Reneé T. Armstead



2/1/16

Dear Students:

Per conversation with the Center for International and Intercultural Education yesterday, please be informed that my e-mail address is RTA6226@sbcglobal.net. With your permission, I was given your contact information because they were confident that you would be interested in and available to participate in a study I am doing for my doctoral degree.

I am a doctoral student majoring in Educational Leadership for Higher Education Administration. I am planning to measure stress management that college students experience or have experienced in internationalization programs. It will also be determined which of your stress management techniques prove most effective in stress reduction. I appreciate your willingness to participate in the research in reference to the stress management assessments of your internationalization program and your return home. I am looking for ten (10) undergraduate students in total to interview and with whom to administer a questionnaire. I wish to work with students from a combination of all races, genders, and socioeconomic levels.

As a doctoral student, I am very familiar with anonymity, confidentiality and their centrality to ethical research practices. Once the data is collected from your responses, please be informed that there will be an anonymization of students so that none of you are identifiable to others. This again is ensuring your confidentiality.

You may contact me at the above e-mail address, if you are interested in participating.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Reneé T. Armstead

8/15/2016

Dear Students:

I received your name from the Coordinator of the Office of Experiential Education & Civic Engagement | National Student Exchange, University College. I received my Master's Degree at the University, did my doctoral internship there and am completing my doctorate in Educational Leadership for Higher Education Administration. I understand that you recently returned from an international internship to the Republic of Nicaragua in Central America.

You are being invited to participate in a research study. The purpose of this study is to determine what may have caused college students stress in the international program in which they participated. It will also be determined which of your stress management techniques were most effective in stress reduction. Another purpose of the study is to determine how students felt upon the return home. You will be asked to complete a survey and I will also set a mutually agreed time to briefly interview you in reference to your experience abroad.

As a doctoral student, I am very familiar with anonymity, confidentiality and their centrality to ethical research practices. Once the data is collected from your responses, please be informed that there will be an anonymization of students so that none of you are identifiable to others. This again is ensuring your confidentiality.

If you are interested in participating in this activity you may contact me at RTA6226@sbcglobal.net. If you are interested, we can start immediately. Thank you.

Reneé T. Armstead