

8-9-2019

## Predicting intent to study abroad among graduate students in higher education and student affairs programs at universities in the southeastern United States

Hannah Elise Holcomb

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Predicting intent to study abroad among graduate students in higher education and student affairs  
programs at universities in the southeastern United States

By

Hannah Elise Holcomb

A Dissertation  
Submitted to the Faculty of  
Mississippi State University  
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy  
in Educational Leadership  
in the Department of Educational Leadership

Mississippi State, Mississippi

August 2019

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2019

Predicting intent to study abroad among graduate students in higher education and student affairs  
programs at universities in the southeastern United States

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Pages in Study 153

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The internationalization of higher education curriculum, including programs in educational leadership, in the United States is increasing, and with the increase in graduate interest in study abroad, this study predicted graduate students pursuing a graduate degree in higher education administration or student affairs (HESA) at institutions in the southeastern United States intent to study abroad short-term. The Theory of Planned Behavior was used to frame the study, which identified the behavioral beliefs (future job prospects), normative beliefs (family expectations), and control beliefs (administrative support) of graduate students that were related to study abroad. Future job prospects, family expectations, and administrative support formed one variable, willingness to pay, which was hypothesized to influence intent to study abroad. Desire and affordability were also hypothesized to influence intent to study abroad. The Theory of Planned Behavior and each variable were assumed to be important to short-term study abroad intent. However, this was an initial study focused on solely graduate students in an education discipline regarding study abroad intent to use the Theory of Planned Behavior and the chosen variables. A survey was emailed to all graduate students in a HESA program at 15 institutions in the southeastern United States. There were 171 students that fully completed the

survey. In this study, I found that future job prospects had a positive relationship with willingness to pay. Thus, hypothesis 2 was supported. However, family expectations and administrative support did not have a positive relationship with willingness to pay indicating that hypotheses 3 and 4 were not supported. Regarding intent to study abroad, both desire and affordability positively influenced intent to study abroad with path coefficients of .62 and .24, respectively, while willingness to pay did not indicating that hypotheses 5 and 6 were supported while hypothesis 1 was not supported. The data were analyzed using a structural equation model (SEM) to create a structural model to understand the strength of the relationship of each variable by the resulting path coefficients and variance. Understanding the beliefs and intentions of such students provided implications to establish or improve existing study abroad programs focusing on graduate students.

## DEDICATION

To my daughter, Allie, for all the love and support you provided as I began, pursued, persisted, and completed my PhD all during your first three years of life. You kept me motivated 100% and for that I am thankful. Know that your daddy and I love you very much.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many thanks to my dissertation chair, Dr. Leonard Taylor, and to my committee members, Dr. David Morse, Dr. Qiana Cutts, Dr. Stephanie King, and Dr. Danielle Molina. The support and effort from each of you is much appreciated, and the knowledge gained from each of you will be useful as I move forward in future research.

Dr. Taylor, thank you for believing in me from day one and for the ongoing support and motivation. Per your advice, I strove to set reachable research and writing goals throughout my dissertation process, and now I have successfully achieved the final goal in the process: publishing my dissertation.

Allie, you mean the world to me, and thank you for your patience during my PhD journey. I look forward to supporting you now in every way possible as you begin K-3 this fall. Glenn, thank you for supporting me, but especially for supporting our family in every way, which allowed me to pursue this educational opportunity.

Mom and Dad, my educational journey began in Pre-K, and the value both of you placed on education and the desire of you both to always provide me the best education possible is greatly appreciated. Those Saturday trips in elementary and middle school to the library to learn how to write a research paper certainly paid off.

At last, thank you to Drs. Schnusenberg, de Jong, and Goel for allowing me to use your survey (with tweaks) in my research, and finally thank you to all participants from the 15 southeastern United States institutions that completed my survey.



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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Within the last 25 years, there was a push to internationalize the higher education curriculum. According to Kwok and Arpan (2002), there was a large focus on the business education in the United States. However, other disciplines, such as educational leadership, which lagged behind other professions (Decieri, Fenwick, & Hutchings, 2005; Schweitz, 2006), had more recently started including international course offerings within the curriculum. Hallinger and Leithwood (1996) provided a valid argument of why educational leadership needed to be internationalized:

A comparative approach to educational administration has the capability to promote the improvement of international understanding, co-operation and goodwill across the international community of educationist. Comparing educational administration across cultures also has intrinsic merit in its own right as a worthwhile intellectual activity aimed at improving understanding of education activities in different places. It is crucial to understand better how schools productively can accommodate such diversity and the forms of leadership likely to assist such accommodation. (p. 6)

Supporting Hallinger and Leithwood (1996), Praetzel and Curcio (1996) went a step further and indicated that students in professional programs must be aware of the international issues in order to properly respond to the needs of the diverse environment. The educational leadership discipline, which includes higher education and student affairs (HESA), progress of internationalizing the discipline was indicated in a study conducted by Bogotch and Maslin-

Ostrowski (2010). Bogotch and Maslin-Ostroski (2010) explored the transformation of an educational leadership department from “...its regional identity and localized practices...to become internationalized in terms of research, teaching, and service” (p. 210).

One way of including international course offerings within the curriculum was offering study abroad programs, and according to Richardson, Scott, Imig, and Flora (2014), gains were found in leadership development through international experiences such as study abroad. Fine and McNamara (2011) agreed in the leadership development by stating that “...producing inter-culturally competent school leaders who can engage in informed, ethical decision-making when confronted with problems that involve diversity of perspectives is becoming an urgent leadership priority” (p. 254). Fine and McNamara (2011) continued to explain that educational leadership students did not have the access to study abroad experiences, which was problematic according to Earnest (2003) and Hofstede and Hofstede (2004), because effective leadership today requires effectively understanding other cultures due to an increasingly global society. Thus, with an increase in a global society, it is important for education leaders to understand how to work with cultural differences and boundaries to achieve goals (Wibbeke, 2009).

Richardson et al. (2014) conducted a study which focused on the impact of a study abroad experience of six doctoral students in an educational leadership program. The study of Richardson et al. (2014) focused on diversity development, which, upon returning from studying abroad, those six graduate students had shifts in their view and definition of diversity. Study abroad also provided cognitive, social, and emotional transformations of graduate students (Escamilla, Aragon, & Franquiz, 2009) and “...creates powerful learning experiences for students” (Rosch & Haber-Curran, 2013, p. 152) while enhancing development of global skills

which can be limited by a classroom environment (Lunceford, 2014; Montgomery & Arensdorf, 2012).

With such positive cognitive, social, and emotional gains, it was no wonder that study abroad participation among students overall continued to rise. Gardner and Witherell (2009) reported that the percentage of students who study abroad increased by 150%. However, the overall number of students studying abroad is increasing, but the number of graduate students that study abroad recently has been declining. The Institute of International Education (IIE) (2017) reported that the percentage of graduate students studying abroad has slowly decreased from 13.5% in 2012 and continually decreased to 12.1% in 2016 of all students that study abroad.

In addition, in the 2014-2015 academic year, IIE (2016) listed the top five leading schools by the number of students who participated in study abroad programs as: New York University, Texas A&M University – College Station, University of Texas – Austin, University of Southern California, and University of Michigan – Ann Arbor. Continuing down the list to number 10, another institution was Michigan, and one in California was listed. The other three institutions that made the list of top 10 were in Minnesota, Ohio, and Indiana (IIE, 2016). According to the leading 10 institutions in study abroad, only two institutions in the southeast United States, Texas A&M University and the University of Texas-Austin, were included. Thus, the presence of study abroad at institutions in the Southeast was far less than in California and more northern and northeastern states.

### **Definition of Study Abroad**

Since this study focused specifically on graduate students in an educational leadership program in the southeastern United States, specifically in a HESA program, study abroad for the



purposes of this study was defined as a short-term (eight weeks or less) “project-based learning, where students work with a client or sponsor, or in some kind of group field project related to real life problems” (Hulstrand, 2015, p. 44). Schnusenberg, de Jong, and Goel (2012) explained that short-term study abroad was unique in that it was important to explore beliefs that influence intent to study abroad because “...short-term study abroad is the initial starting point for international experiences” (p. 340). In addition, Hulstrand (2015) informed that the increase in short-term, being eight weeks or less, abroad programs better accommodated schedules and were more cost-efficient. More specifically, study abroad for this study included traveling abroad short-term outside the United States to gain a cultural and educational experience using practice and applied learning to gain skills that were useful upon returning to the United States and could be used in future interviews specific to their field of study.

### **Background**

In addition to the positive gains previously mentioned, study abroad experiences contributed positively to students’ employability in an increasingly global job market (Bandyopadhyay & Bandyopadhyay, 2016). National Association of Foreign Student Advisers’ (NAFSA), the Association of International Educators, strategic plan was revised to support graduates, both undergraduates and graduate students, to enter the workforce as global-ready. NAFSA is the world’s largest organization that is committed to international education, and thus introduces policies to encourage an interconnected world through international education (NAFSA, 2018a). According to the NAFSA website, there are current policy priorities and initiatives that focus on supporting a globally proficient workforce by increasing study abroad opportunities because such opportunities “contribute in vital ways to preparing students for the competitive global environment...” (NAFSA, 2018a, para. 1). Graduate Student Central was a

project that was begun by NAFSA in 2010 to assist graduate students with advancing their studies and with professional development related to international education (NAFSA, 2018b).

Students that did take part in such experiences not only gained readiness for a global workforce but benefitted from their efforts to participate in a high impact practice (HIP). Scholars focusing on student engagement found that HIPs, such as study abroad, positively impacted student learning and choices related to both college experiences and experiences after college (Astin, 1985; Chickering & Gamson, 1987). A study conducted by Stebleton, Soria, and Cherney (2013) supported Kuh (2009) "...identification of study abroad as a high-impact practice for student engagement, which serves to deepen students' learning and is empirically linked to desired college outcomes, namely, global and intercultural competencies" (p. 15). Stebleton et al.'s (2013) study was conducted among undergraduate students across 12 large research institutions, which included gaining a response from 99,810 participants.

NAFSA (2017) reported that during the 2015-2016 academic year, 1.6% or 325,332 undergraduate and graduate students studied abroad. As indicated by the IIE (2017), in 2016, 12.1% of the total number of students that studied abroad represented graduate students. Thus, there was slightly under 40,000 graduate students that studied abroad in 2016.

In an effort to increase study abroad participation, Senator Paul Simon created the 2005 Commission on the Abraham Lincoln Study Abroad Fellowship Program (Commission on the Abraham Lincoln Study Abroad Fellowship Program, 2005). The 2005 Commission had a goal to have one million United States students study abroad by 2016-2017, and the Commission also underscored "...the need for the government and universities to expand study abroad programs, including making them more accessible and affordable to students" (Nyaupane, Paris, & Teye, 2011, p. 206). Subsequently, the United States Senator Paul Simon Study Abroad Foundation

Act of 2007 was established and aimed to make study abroad a standard practice for undergraduate students (Nyaupane, Paris, & Teye, 2011). However, both the 2005 Lincoln Commission and the Senator Simon Act of 2007 focused on undergraduate students.

### **Statement of the Problem**

According to Hulstrand (2015) and from the statistics previously listed, study abroad most often focused on undergraduate students, but recently Hulstrand (2015) emphasized that the interest to study abroad has increased among graduate students. To date, there was a deficiency of research focused on graduate students and study abroad. This was certainly a challenge because as mentioned previously, currently roughly 40,000 graduate students study abroad each year.

More research was needed to understand study abroad and its relation to graduate students because the proposed research was innovative. It will provide a tremendous benefit to a broad group of study abroad programs throughout the United States. Research investigating graduate student opportunities in study abroad programs was extremely limited. Study abroad opportunities at United States higher education institutions were almost exclusively aimed at undergraduate students. The data gathered and subsequent analysis will provide value in designing study abroad programs that provide opportunities for graduate students. While this study focused on graduate students in HESA programs and southeastern United States institutions, the methodology and framework could be applied to other colleges (e.g., Arts and Sciences, Engineering, etc.) and other geographic regions. Study abroad programs may use this methodology and framework to assess graduate student intent to study abroad at their home institutions and, thus, design appropriate programs that will increase study abroad participation, improving and expanding the university experience to a new and diverse group of students.

At the University of Maryland-Baltimore (UMB), where 88% of the students are graduate students, and through a survey conducted by the UMB Student Center for Global Education, it was discovered that a significant percentage of the students had studied abroad as undergraduates and wanted to have the same opportunity as a graduate student (Hulstrand, 2015). Simply put by Hulstrand (2015),

Because graduate students are constrained by both time and finances, we try to design programs that will be impactful professionally, so that students come out of the opportunity with a portfolio of work they've done on a program, or skills they can present to an employer. (p. 46)

With such constraints as time and finances, predicting the intent to study abroad among graduate students, specifically students in an educational leadership program, is important to explore since the interest among graduate students to study abroad has increased.

Even so, two of the policies mentioned above, 2005 Lincoln Commission and the Senator Paul Simon Study Abroad Act of 2007, were directed to increase study abroad numbers of undergraduate students and find solutions to assist in the high costs of study abroad for undergraduate students. Policies and legislation focused solely to increase the number of graduate students that study abroad and to assist with the finances related to study abroad were scarce in comparison to those of undergraduate students. There were graduate student scholarships offered by the government that assisted with graduate student study abroad; however, the scholarships offered for graduate students were for students who would spend extended time abroad ("USA study abroad," n.d.), which was unfortunate for graduate students who have an intent to study abroad in a short-term study abroad program due to time and financial constraints.

At last, there was currently an increase in graduate student enrollment at institutions, and with an increase in graduate student enrollment, this means an increase in study abroad opportunities. There was a noticeable increase in the amount of students who likely go on to graduate school rather than getting a job (Okahana & Zhou, 2017; Roll, 2017). Farrington (2014) confirmed that over the last five years, a significant number of students made a direct move to graduate school from undergraduate school.

According to a report released by the Council on Graduate Schools, recent trends in graduate school enrollments were increasing (Okahana & Zhou, 2017). More specifically from Okahana and Zhou (2017), between the years 2006 and 2016, the percentage increase per year of enrollment to graduate school was 1.1%. This rate seems slow, and it is, but an article published in 2017 by Inside Higher Ed recognized that graduate school enrollment was continuing to rise (Roll, 2017). Because now more students increasingly desire to go on for graduate education before entering the workforce than before, we should shift our attention to graduate student study abroad.

One advantage of studying abroad included gaining global competencies for undergraduate and graduate students, and the current and continuous efforts of the legislative initiatives to try to encourage study abroad participation were focused upon undergraduate students. With the focus on undergraduate students, a challenge suggested a lack of advancement of graduate student study abroad initiatives. Thus, the number of graduate students that gain the global competences offered through study abroad did not reach the demand for global competences, which resulted in failure of the United States higher education system at the graduate level. Fitzsimmons (2003) specifically stated that, “Americans don’t have enough knowledge of the rest of the world – a weakness that represents a national liability” (as cited in

Toncar, Reid, & Anderson, 2005, p. 64-65). Lane (2003) was in agreement that if citizens of the United States do not have the necessary knowledge of the world, then that was a loss for the country (as cited in Toncar et al., 2005). In conclusion, with less encouragement of graduate student study abroad, the variables that influence study abroad intent were not being addressed. The prior studies that have addressed the decision to study abroad did not present a comprehensive framework (Schnusenberg et al., 2012). Certain influences that predict intent to study abroad can be further studied to better understand the decisions of intent to study abroad among graduate students. The variables regarding intent to study abroad in this study were taken from previous literature and were viewed as important motivators to encourage graduate students to study abroad.

### **Purpose of the Study**

With such a strong impact of study abroad and the gain of importance, the understudied and limited investigation of study abroad and graduate students in the southeastern United States, specifically graduate students in HESA programs, this study predicted intent to study abroad of graduate students in HESA programs in the southeastern United States.

With a rise in study abroad importance and the rise of graduate student interest, the factors that motivate graduate students to participate in such programs were discovered, as suggested by Richardson et al. (2014), this information was not readily available in a field of study such as educational leadership. Thus, in order for institutions to effectively and improve marketing promotions of study abroad, Park, Hsieh, and Lee (2017) explained exploring intent to travel abroad was important. Schnusenberg et al. (2012) indicated that "...universities have simply taken the approach that the availability of the study abroad programs should be enough motivation to participate in them" (p. 338). Thus, a gap existed with regards to graduate students

and why they intend to study abroad. The literature was dearth in that it covered undergraduate students and their intent to study abroad such as the studies conducted by Salisbury, Umbach, Paulsen, and Pascarella (2009), Stroud (2010), and Schnusenberg et al. (2012).

According to Schnusenberg et al. (2012), "...little theory has guided past attempts to explain factors involved in study abroad" (p. 339). Due to no prior use of a theory with predictive power such as the Theory of Reasoned Action or the Theory of Planned Behavior to explain findings, the prior results were not generalizable to certain populations (Bello, Leung, Radebaugh, Tung, and van Witteloostuijn, 2009). The ultimate goal was to frame this study using the Theory of Planned Behavior in order to predict intent of short-term study abroad of a group of graduate students using variables from a prior study (Schnusenberg et al., 2012) that motivated students to study abroad to develop a framework that pertained to variables related to graduate students and short-term study abroad.

### **Research Questions**

RQ1: What is the relationship between HESA graduate students' intent to study abroad and their: (a) willingness to pay; (b) desire to participate in study abroad programs; and (c) perception of affordability of study abroad programs?

RQ2: What is the relationship between HESA graduate students' willingness to pay for study abroad and their: (a) behavioral beliefs (future job prospects); (b) normative beliefs (family expectations); and (c) control beliefs (administrative support)?

### **Hypotheses**

Based on the behavioral beliefs, normative beliefs, control beliefs, willingness to pay, desire, and affordability and using the suggested theoretical model detailed in Chapter 2, which included the Theory of Planned Behavior, the following hypotheses were tested. Hypotheses 1,

5, and 6 were related to the first research question, while Hypotheses 2, 3, and 4 were related to the second research question.

H1: HESA graduate students' willingness to pay for study abroad programs will be positively related to their intent to study abroad.

H2: HESA graduate students' behavioral beliefs of future job prospects related to study abroad programs will be positively related to their willingness to pay.

H3: HESA graduate students' normative beliefs of family expectations of study abroad programs will be positively related to their willingness to pay.

H4: HESA graduate students' control beliefs of administrative support of study abroad programs will be positively related to their willingness to pay.

H5: HESA graduate students' desire to participate in study abroad programs will be positively related to their intent to study abroad.

H6: HESA graduate students' perceptions of affordability of study abroad programs will be positively related to their intent to study abroad.

### **Definition of Terms**

There were terms in this study that benefit from further discussion and definition. The terms were behavioral beliefs, graduate student, higher education administration, intent, internationalization, normative beliefs, perceived behavioral control, student affairs, and study abroad.

1. BaileyShea (2009) defined *behavioral beliefs* as, "...an individual's beliefs about the outcomes of a specific behavior" (p. 43).



2. The Council of Graduate Schools (2004) defined *graduate students* “as those students seeking post-baccalaureate degrees, including academic graduate degrees and research doctoral degrees” (as cited in Gardner & Barker, 2015, p. 339).
3. *Higher education administration* was defined by Institute of Education Sciences (2010) as, “A program that focuses on the principles and practice of administration in four-year colleges, universities and higher education systems, the study of higher education as an object of applied research, and which may prepare individuals to function as administrators...” (p. 1).
4. *Intent* was defined by BaileyShea (2009) as, “...the likelihood that an individual will perform an action or behavior” (p. 62).
5. Altbach and Knight (2007) defined *internationalization* as, “Internationalization includes the policies and practices undertaken by academic systems and institutions – and even individuals – to cope with the global academic environment” (p. 290).
6. “*Normative beliefs* are the beliefs a person has about what certain people or groups think he or she should do regarding a behavior” (Phillips, 2014, p. 18).
7. Kwan, Bray, and Martin Ginis (2009) explained *perceived behavioral control* as:  
...the beliefs that an individual has about the presence of factors that may enable or hinder his or her performance of the behavior and about the perceived degree of control he or she has over these factors, exerting both direct effects on behavior as well as on behavioral intentions (p. 46).
8. *Student affairs* as defined by Love (2003), “At its broadest definition, student affairs could be said to consist of any advising, counseling, management, or administrative function at a college or university that exists outside the classroom” (p. 1).

9. *Study abroad* was defined by Peterson et al. (2007) as “Education abroad that results in progress toward an academic degree at a student’s home institution” (p. 176).

## Overview of the Study

### Researcher’s Epistemological Focus/Orientation

I used a quantitative approach with a carefully designed survey to learn the relationship among variables such as desire, willingness to pay, affordability, and beliefs to predict intent to study abroad. The design and execution of this study reflected a post-positivist epistemological stance. Defining positivism first was appropriate to better understand post-positivism. Crotty (1998) defined positivism in that it “offers assurance of unambiguous and accurate knowledge of the world” (p. 18). The term post-positivism materialized later, as it was very similar to positivism, but it lessened the positivist “claims without rejecting its basic perspective.” (Crotty, 1998, p. 19). A more extensive discussion of the challenges, limitations, and critiques of post-positivism can be found in the methodology section in Chapter 3.

For this study, an electronic survey was distributed to the participants in order to collect data reflecting their beliefs related to study abroad. The quantitative data collected were used to conduct a statistical analysis in efforts to predict within an allowable degree of uncertainty, factors that influence HESA graduate students’ intent to study abroad.

### Theoretical Framework

**Background.** At first, using the Theory of Reasoned Action seemed appropriate for this study, since the study focused on the motivators and influencers of study abroad intent. Intent of a behavior is influenced by particular beliefs. However, after further research and the addition of the perceived behavioral control variable to the Theory of Planned Behavior, it made sense to use the Theory of Planned Behavior as a framework for this study. The Theory of Planned Behavior

was an extension of the Theory of Reasoned Action (Ajzen, 1991), which indicated that the Theory of Planned Behavior was established more recently. The major addition to the Theory of Planned Behavior was perceived behavioral control, which was valuable to this study and was further discussed in Chapter 2.

The Theory of Planned Behavior was used in Schnusenberg et al.'s (2012) study exploring short-term study abroad decisions of undergraduate business students, and it was determined that each component of the Theory of Planned Behavior was important regarding short-term study abroad intent. The theoretical contribution in this study was determining if the same components of the Theory of Planned Behavior regarding short-term study abroad intentions were the same for graduate students in an educational leadership discipline. Finally, exploring the beliefs that influence intent to study abroad in short-term study abroad was significant because Gaia (2015) explained that "Having an academic experience abroad contributes to students' personal and academic development by helping them to grow in global and cultural awareness, which is increasingly an institutional goal of particular importance in the 21st century" (p. 21). In addition, study abroad experiences can have an impact so strong as to create a desire to study abroad again (Hulstrand, 2015; Niehaus & Crain, 2013). In conclusion, a brief overview of both the Theory of Reasoned Action and the Theory of Planned Behavior were provided below, but the full discussion of each theory was included in Chapter 2.

**The Theory of Reasoned Action.** Montano and Kasprzyk (2002) explained that the Theory of Reasoned Action measured the attitudes and social normative perceptions of a behavior that guide a person's intention to execute the certain behavior. The Theory of Reasoned Action consisted of three variables: attitude, subjective norm, and intention. The theory explained that behavioral intentions were determined by subjective norms (social influences) and

a person's attitude of a certain behavior. The Theory of Reasoned Action was significant because it provided a way to help in deciding and understanding why people behave in such a particular way (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980).

**The Theory of Planned Behavior.** The Theory of Planned Behavior is an extension of the Theory of Reasoned Action (Ajzen, 1991). The Theory of Planned Behavior added perceived behavioral control to the Theory of Reasoned Action. Kwan, Bray, and Martin Ginis (2009) explained that an individual's perceptions about the existence of factors that encourage or impede exhibiting a certain behavior and identifying the degree of control that they have over such factors was perceived behavioral control. Ajzen (1991) found perceived behavioral control to be missing from the Theory of Reasoned Action and found it to be important, as it directs attention to the ease or difficulty one perceives of performing a certain behavior. The ease or difficulty perception of an individual was usually based off past experiences (Ajzen, 1991). In this particular study, the Theory of Planned Behavior supported the intent to study abroad related to variables that influence intent. More specifically, the theory provided knowledge on how the behavioral beliefs, normative beliefs, and control beliefs of graduate students related to study abroad were connected to study abroad intent.

## **Methodology**

Data were tested to check the hypotheses and to gain further insight related to the research questions with collection of data from graduate students in a HESA program at institutions in the southeastern United States through a questionnaire, or, more specifically, a survey. After the survey data were collected, the data were statistically analyzed to predict study abroad intent. The survey consisted of 46 questions. With the exception of the one consent question, two identifier questions at the beginning of the survey, the 11 demographic questions at

the conclusion of the survey, and the question asking for an email address, the questions pertaining to study abroad intent used a 7-point Likert-type scale, as a 7-point scale provided more potential variation for responses (Rahem & Darrah, 2018).

**Survey.** The survey was taken from a study conducted by Schnusenberg et al. (2012), as Schnusenberg et al. (2012) tested the same hypotheses (slightly changed wording) with the same variables but a different population. The population in Schnusenberg et al.'s (2012) study was undergraduate business students, whereas, the population of this study was graduate students in an education discipline. With slight adjustments made to the 31 questions from Schnusenberg et al.'s (2012) survey, the survey had questions related to all variables: intent to study abroad, willingness to pay, affordability, desire, future job prospects, family expectations, and administrative support. The 5-point Likert scale used in the original study was changed to a 7-point Likert scale for this study. A detailed discussion of the survey was included in Chapter 3.

### **Summary of Methodology**

A structural equation model (SEM) was conducted to measure the relationship between all the independent and dependent variables. Thus, to ensure the model was fit, specific criteria were checked to ensure the model met the requirements to be valid and reliable. The deeper explanation of the SEM and model-data fit was discussed in Chapter 3.

### **Delimitations**

The delimitations or boundaries I selected for this study were discussed next. This study focused solely on graduate students in the southeastern United States. It was limited to study abroad intent of graduate students in HESA programs. The United States was ranked eighteenth in the world related to the number of students that study abroad (Organization for Economic

Cooperation and Development, 2014). So, students from other countries do study abroad; however, the study abroad accounts and experiences of those students from another country were not analyzed in this study.

Within the context of the United States, only a select group of students were surveyed. The students in this study had to be of graduate student standing and in an institution specific HESA program located in the southeastern United States. As such, the results from this study were intended to represent HESA graduate students who study abroad in the United States higher education setting. This study focused on predicting the intent of study abroad of a specific group of graduate students, so there may be other variables related to intent to study abroad that were not included in this study and not in the final results. This study was very specific in the type of participants included and exploring one piece of the study abroad puzzle, intent to study abroad.

### **Significance of the Study**

This study provided an understanding of study abroad intent of graduate students in HESA programs. As previously indicated and in Chapter 2, the majority of previous research and previous studies were focused upon undergraduates in study abroad. Those studies indicated insight on intent and perceptions of undergraduate students, which provided a foundation for exploring graduate students' relationship to study abroad intent. Bello et al. (2009) explained that most findings from prior studies regarding intent to study abroad were not generalizable of the United States student, undergraduate or graduate, because the findings from previous studies failed to describe the findings using a theory with predictive power. This study used the Theory of Planned Behavior to describe the findings, which made this study significant in that this study used theories with predictive power to explain the results.

This study focused on the perception of graduate students regarding intent to study abroad and how graduate students made decisions regarding study abroad, a contribution was made to the dearth literature surrounding graduate students, but more specifically graduate students in HESA and study abroad. By adding to the body of empirical studies of graduate student study abroad, findings from this study stood to inform practice related to graduate student engagement experiences and study abroad. As practitioners and administrators continue to enhance the learning experiences of graduate students, insights from this study could be useful for those considering the utility of study abroad experiences. As study abroad offices continue to expand their reach on campuses, this study provided useful information that can guide their efforts to attract and encourage more graduate student participation. Considering institutional policies, administrators and faculty across disciplines could use insights from this study to explore strategic partnerships to advance globalized and interdisciplinary learning experiences.

Study abroad was viewed as an individualized experience and was learned through this study, as beliefs of such an experience differed among various students even in the same graduate school discipline.

### **Organization of the Study**

With an increased interest of graduate students to study abroad, the lack of federal regulations and initiatives aimed at graduate students encouraging study abroad or addressing financial assistance to study abroad had the potential to discourage study abroad among graduate students, as graduate students were already faced with time and financial constraints (Hulstrand, 2015). This study sought to understand more on graduate students in HESA programs regarding predicting intent to study abroad. Through a quantitative analysis of a survey, this study determined the relationship of variables that predict graduate student intent to study abroad.

Framed by the Theory of Planned Behavior, this study differed from similar research on predicting intent to study abroad due to the nature of the population in this study being specifically graduate students in HESA programs.

Chapter 2 discussed the motivations or opportunities gained from studying abroad and constraints of study abroad. Chapter 2 deepened the understanding of other factors that may also predict intent to study abroad. Such a discussion of the theory and the literature on study abroad, Chapter 2 provided a model to indicate how a theory can be predictive of the results and findings that were discussed in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5. Chapter 3 discussed the methodology, which included collecting data by means of a survey and analyzing the data by using a SEM technique. Chapter 5 included a discussion and concluded the study by providing the limitations and further implications of the study.



## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

In this chapter, I discussed literature related to study abroad and graduate preparation programs for HESA careers to provide necessary context for this study. Next, I introduced Ajzen's (1991) Theory of Planned Behavior and its evolution from the Theory of Reasoned Action, which served as the framework for this study. This theory was relevant to this study because this study extended the theories to include the influence of behavioral beliefs, normative beliefs, and control beliefs on the intent to study abroad of graduate students in HESA programs. Finally, the Theory of Planned Behavior and the literature on study abroad were synthesized by suggesting a model that incorporated some pieces of the current theory with certain beliefs of intent to study abroad. While this study was focused solely on graduate students in HESA programs; the suggested model could be applied to graduate students in other disciplines or areas of study.

#### **Review of Literature**

Within the literature related to study abroad, there was an overwhelming focus on undergraduate students (Bandyopadhyay & Bandyopadhyay, 2016; Taylor & Rivera, 2011), ranging from their decisions to study abroad (Brown, Boateng, & Evans, 2016; Cai, Wei, Lu, & Day, 2015; Salisbury et al., 2009), the impact of study abroad on their learning outcomes (Dwyer, 2004; Paige, Fry, Stallman, Josic, & Jon, 2009; Sutton & Rubin, 2004), students' general experiences abroad, and the specific experiences of underrepresented students in study

abroad (Brux & Fry, 2010). There was significantly less attention paid to the graduate students, with a small number of graduate students sometimes included in the samples of predominantly undergraduate focused studies (Bandyopadhyay & Bandyopadhyay, 2016; Taylor & Rivera, 2011), and very few empirical studies focused solely on graduate students (Richardson et al., 2014; Singh, 2016), compared to undergraduates. In constructing a review of literature relevant to this study I focused on: (a) the current models for study abroad choice and decision making, most of which were used with undergraduate populations; (b) graduate students' engagement experiences, as study abroad had been identified and used as a HIP to promote engagement; (c) policies that related to encouraging and increasing study abroad in the United States; and (d) the context of graduate preparation programs in student affairs, more especially how and why study abroad opportunities contributed to their goals in preparing practitioners.

### **Study Abroad Choice and Decision-Making Models**

Researchers discussed choice models for college choice, and in addition there were choices and decisions that were addressed with regards to studying abroad. Cai et al. (2015) conducted a study looking specifically at hospitality and tourism students in the United States and their decision-making process concerning study abroad. More specifically, the students in the study went to China on a semester-long internship related to hospitality and tourism. The study was aimed to learn the factors and influences that drove the decisions to participate in study abroad programs and the use of a holistic framework to explain such decisions (Cai et al., 2015).

A grounded theory approach was the methodology of choice in Cai et al.'s (2015) study. It was noted that this approach best helped understand the decision-making process of students who participated in study abroad programs, as the "...method seeks to develop or discover how

people act and react to this phenomenon” (Cai et al., 2015, p. 53). The depth and quality of the data gathered in the study was the focus to determine the decision-making process. The data were collected from 10 undergraduate students who had just participated in a study abroad and internship opportunity for a semester in China. The data were gained through two focus group sessions and three interviews. The decision-making framework was developed based off the collected data from the three questions centered on their initial gain of information on the program, how and why students chose to participate, and the post-evaluation from the abroad experience (Cai et al., 2015).

Thus, Cai et al. (2015) found that the decision-making process of study abroad occurred in three phases: pre-evaluation, decision-making, and post participation. The phases were determined after analyzing the data and ensuring consistency and accuracy among focus group sessions and individual interviews were achieved. Through use of grounded theory, a line-by-line coding was used to make meaning of the text. The pre-evaluation phase begun once students became aware of study abroad opportunities. Several students could be very unaware of study abroad, its value, the perceptions of study abroad, myths surrounding study abroad, or even where to go or what to do in order to pursue such an opportunity. Cai et al. (2015) included that the pre-evaluation phase included conducting research on study abroad and programs available. The next phase suggested by Cai et al. (2015) was the actual decision making process, which included the discovery of what students found to motivate or encourage them to study abroad and the barriers that impeded them from studying abroad. The final stage included post-participation, and this stage was where the students who participated evaluated their choice or decision to study abroad (Cai et al., 2015).

The phases listed above were the sequence in which students go through, but those that did not study abroad did not make it to the final stage of post-participation. Coincidentally, some of the same variables that affected intent to study abroad were also used in students' decisions or choices for attending a chosen higher education institution (Salisbury et al., 2009). In Salisbury et al.'s (2009) study, a college choice model was used to determine intent of students to study abroad. More specifically, the research focused on capital (financial, human, social, and cultural) and how each related to students' intent to study abroad. Salisbury et al. (2009) provided definitions of each of the capitals explaining that human capital was when "individuals accumulate...knowledge, understanding, talents, and skills...through investment in education in exchange for increased earning, power, and occupational status" (p. 122). Cultural capital came from family class status and consisted of "...individual's cultural knowledge, language skills, educational credentials, and school-related information..." (Salisbury et al., 2009, p. 123). Social capital was defined as "...access to information, resources, and support" (Salisbury et al., 2009, p. 123). Finally, financial capital involved essentially family income but also determining of benefits related to the cost based on one's financial standing (Salisbury et al., 2009).

The usable sample for the study was 2772 students from 19 different institutions that varied by type, location, and other factors. Salisbury et al. (2009) found that financial capital, human capital, social capital, and cultural capital all affected decisions of students to study abroad. Students' intention and choice to study abroad were influenced by several factors that fell into the capital categories previously listed. Findings suggested that social and cultural capital gained before college increased the intent of students to study abroad. Students with more financial capital, human capital, social capital, and cultural capital had a higher intent to study abroad (Salisbury et al., 2009).

## Engaging Graduate Students

As previously noted, through research and discussion with study abroad program directors and faculty, the number of graduate students who studied abroad in 2016 was about 40,000. IIE (2017) provided statistics to confirm that not only was the number of graduate students studying abroad diminishing, but the numbers of undergraduates studying abroad was increasing. In the 2012-2013 academic year, only 13.5% represented graduate students in those that studied abroad, whereas 86.4% were undergraduate students (IIE, 2017). This trend continued over the next several years. The decrease in the graduate students studying abroad was not a significant drop; however, it was consistent over several years. In 2013-2014, study abroad percentages of graduate students dropped from 13.5% to 12.7%, and of those that studied abroad, 87% represented the undergraduate students, which was an increase from 86.4% (IIE, 2017). This same trend continued for the following academic year (2014-2015) with 12.1% of the study abroad population being graduate students (IIE, 2017). The percentage of graduate students remained stagnant in 2015-2016 with 12.1% representing graduate students and again an increase and all-time high for undergraduate numbers studying abroad at 87.7% (IIE, 2017).

Gardner and Barker (2015) shared that the level of engagement and involvement of undergraduates could better be measured, whereas little was known about the involvement and engagement of graduate students on campuses. Caulfield (2010) made the same claim that little was known about measuring the engagement of graduate students. Much of the lack of knowledge or published literature on graduate student engagement could be attributed to a statistic given by the United States Census Bureau that at least 75% of graduate students had a full-time job and informed that 50% of graduate students were married (Caulfield, 2010).

Knowing more about study abroad perceptions of graduate students was a start to learning more about graduate student engagement, as graduate students were 14% of the student enrollment in

all of the United States according to the United States Department of Education in 2008 (Gardner & Barker, 2015). Gardner and Barker (2015) made the remark that higher education professionals had several opportunities to engage with graduate students, as graduate students made up a generous percentage of the student population at many institutions. Although not all higher education institutions are made up of 14% of graduate students, some have more and some have less. For example, some of the institutions where this study took place, the graduate student population does not represent exactly 14%. Student learning outcomes of study abroad, addressed in a latter part of this chapter, could be attributed to the importance of graduate student engagement and involvement on university campuses.

Kuh (2001) continued to promote student engagement, as it defined the quality of an institution. One measurement of a quality of an institution was retention and attrition of students. Pontius and Harper (2006) spoke about graduate student attrition explaining that student affairs departments could do a better job supporting graduate students. Pontius and Harper (2006) continued that retention of graduate students was related to student-faculty relationships, interacting and being engaged on campus, and familiarity with the graduate school. Just as in undergraduate education, the support and collaboration of student affairs departments and academic departments was effective for graduate education (Pontius & Harper, 2006). Study abroad provided the opportunity to create collaboration between departments and increase student engagement, which promoted retention of students.

### **Encouraging Participation**

Encouraging participation of study abroad provided reinforcement to students of the importance of participation in high impact practices such as study abroad and promoted student engagement efforts. There are higher education institutions in the United States that require all

students to study abroad or take part in an international experience before they graduate. IIE listed the top 20 to 25 institutions with the highest number of students to participate in study abroad experiences. In the 2014-2015 academic year, the IIE (2016) listed the top five leading schools by the number of students that participated in study abroad programs as: New York University, Texas A&M University – College Station, University of Texas – Austin, University of Southern California, and University of Michigan – Ann Arbor. Brown et al. (2016) described the factors that supported and encouraged decisions to study abroad, and one included not only having useful and adequate amounts of information available to students, but having the information to them as early as possible in their academic career.

Not only was study abroad participation encouraged through readily available information at higher education institutions, but a couple of policies related to encouraging and increasing study abroad in the United States were implemented in the early 2000s focusing much on undergraduate students. Senator Paul Simon created the 2005 Commission on the Abraham Lincoln Study Abroad Fellowship Program which emphasized the accessibility and affordability of study abroad afforded to students through both government agencies and universities. The Commission's goal of having one million United States students study abroad by 2016-2017 was supported by an act that was established two years later in 2007. The United States Senator Paul Simon Study Abroad Foundation Act of 2007 was created and aimed to make study abroad a standard practice for undergraduate students (Nyaupane, Paris, & Teye, 2011).

More recently in 2010, NAFSA's strategic plan was revised to support both undergraduates and graduate students to enter the workforce as global-ready, and NAFSA produced policies to encourage an interconnected world through international education. In 2010, the introduction of NAFSA's Graduate Student Central focused on graduate students and

their professional development related to international education. Current policy priorities and initiatives that focused on supporting a globally proficient workforce could be achieved through study abroad opportunities (NAFSA, 2018a; NAFSA, 2018b).

### **Graduate Preparation Programs: Higher Education Student Affairs and Study Abroad**

The recent increasingly internationalization of the educational leadership curriculum was valuable in that including international course offerings within the curriculum provided an opportunity for study abroad, which could provide leadership and diversity development (Richardson et al., 2014). However, “It is unclear whether graduate programs in student affairs have been satisfactory in preparing student affairs administrators in the rapidly changing environment of higher education” (Herdlein, 2004, p. 51). Prior suggestions to improve the graduate curriculum in HESA included increasing the multicultural awareness (Herdlein, 2004) and including an experiential learning and decision-making component (Ostroth, 1975). Herdlein (2004) also explained that several prior studies suggested implementing a more holistic curriculum, which promoted the emotional, social, and cognitive development of students (Gansemerp-Topf, Ross, & Johnson, 2006).

Thus, graduate students in HESA programs reaped future benefits from holistic graduate preparation programs because Lovitts (2001) indicated from a study conducted on doctoral students that students’ emotional, social, and cognitive development provided future success. Therefore, a student learning gap explained by Lunceford (2014) and Montgomery and Arensdorf (2012) of only classroom learning in HESA graduate programs was not adequate preparation could be solved through study abroad because study abroad provided cognitive, social, and emotional transformations of graduate students (Escamilla, Aragon, & Franquiz,



2009) and “...creates powerful learning experiences for students” (Rosch & Haber-Curran, 2013, p. 152).

Graduate preparation programs in HESA were vital to retention of new professionals, as it had been noted that 50% to 60% of professionals left the field within five years of becoming a professional (Tull, 2006). Renn and Jessup-Anger (2008) provided one way to address new professional attrition was to focus on the preparation programs of the new professionals. The successful transition from a graduate school program to a new professional role could be met by ensuring the graduate curriculum aligned with the needs of the professional roles within HESA. Thus, competencies required of the profession were created to standardize the learning outcomes gained from graduate preparation programs.

To create a consistent graduate preparation program curriculum in HESA, the Council for the Advance of Standards (CAS) were implemented (Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education, 2006). Miller (1996) explained that several higher education professional organizations developed the CAS Standards in 1979 with a purpose “...to develop and promulgate standards that enhance the quality of a student’s total learning experience in higher education” (CAS, 2006, p. 15). Several revisions had been made to the first CAS standards that were published and distributed in 1986, which only included 16 functional areas (Keeling, 2010). The latest version of the CAS Standards was published in 2015, which now included 45 functional areas (CAS, 2018). Functional area statements were “...criteria describing the fundamental essential expectations of practice agreed upon by the profession at large for a given institutional function” (Keeling, 2010, p. 9).

Wilson (2004) explained that with a change in generations (from Generation X to Millennial Generation) of the majority of the students in the HESA graduate programs, there was

a shift in expectations of the professional preparedness and development of the students. A common request of new professionals in the field regarding graduate preparation programs was found to include spending more time on how to develop professional skills (Renn & Jessup-Anger, 2008). Schuh (2014) found that student affairs educators today gained a great deal "...of learning to one's understanding of higher education as well as luster to one's careers" (p. 23) from international study experiences. Being prepared as a new professional in the HESA field was dependent upon professional development learning opportunities available to students. To conclude, in the profession, American Council on Education (ACE; 2016) explained that student affairs administrators were expected to not only serve international students but to advance global competencies. It was clear that proper preparation and the professions of HESA made contributions and played a vital role in campus internationalization.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework of Ajzen's (1991) Theory of Planned Behavior was used as the framework for this study. The uniqueness of this study was that study abroad was focusing on graduate students in HESA programs while using the theory to explore how certain behaviors affect intent to study abroad. The Theory of Planned Behavior was an extension of the Theory of Reasoned Action. With such an extension, it was important to first explain the Theory of Reasoned Action then explain the Theory of Planned Behavior.

### **The Theory of Reasoned Action**

The Theory of Reasoned Action focused on the fact that humans are rational actors, meaning decisions are made through available information. In addition, the theory suggested that people weigh the value of the outcome before partaking in a particular behavior. With behavior intention informing a certain behavior, that could be applied to study abroad in that students that

intend to study abroad will more than likely do so. The theory found that only two factors determined behavioral intention: attitude and subjective norm (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980). If a person's feelings or beliefs were positive (attitude) as well as that same individual feeling or believing that important people had the same positive feelings or beliefs (subjective norm), then it was more likely that the engagement for that person in such a behavior was higher. Attitude and subjective norm worked together to influence intent.

**Prior study using the Theory of Reasoned Action.** Peterson's (2003) study focused largely on and used the Theory of Reasoned Action to frame her study. Her study focused on the opinions and experiences of those that participated in study abroad experiences, while also examining the factors that were associated with communication strategies. Peterson (2003) explored and compared the characteristics and beliefs of those that had never studied abroad, those that had studied abroad once, and those that had studied abroad several times to recognize the similarities and differences of each of the groups sampled.

The results indicated that those that had previously participated in study abroad experiences had statistically significant higher means related to each part of the Theory of Reasoned Action (behavioral beliefs, evaluation of outcomes, attitude, normative beliefs, and subjective norms) than those that had never participated in study abroad experiences. As indicated and hypothesized, participants who had participated in study abroad multiple times were more likely to have a higher intent to study abroad than one-time participants. The results were revealed by conducting a regression indicating that attitude toward study abroad and subjective norm influenced study abroad intent. Even though both influenced study abroad intent, subjective norm had the strongest influence, but attitude was a stronger influence for repeat participation in study abroad experiences (Peterson, 2003).

There were two specific limitations listed in the study related to the theoretical framework. First, the students self-reported data as they completed the survey, which did not guarantee that those participating represented all study abroad participants. More specifically, there were several more females than males that completed the survey, and that could have skewed results. A final limitation was related to measurement. The survey was very long, with three measurement sections (behavioral beliefs, evaluation of outcomes, and importance of outcomes). The sections looked similar and therefore participants could assume all sections were the exact same and did not continue to answer the questions (Peterson, 2003).

There were other research areas of focus that used the Theory of Reasoned Action as a framework, as this theory was not only appropriate to explore study abroad participation. For example, Strader and Katz (1990) used the Theory of Reasoned Action and applied it to career choice of students (as cited in Phillips, 2014). Interestingly enough, the Theory of Reasoned Action had been applied to studies that focused on the use of alcohol, tobacco, and drugs (Sharma & Kanekar, 2007). Marcoux and Shope (1997) conducted a study exploring the use of alcohol of middle school students, and the Theory of Reasoned Action was applied to the study to focus on predicting the intention of middle school students' use of alcohol. As Sharma and Kanekar (2007) mentioned, the Theory of Reasoned Action had been applied to studies exploring tobacco, more specifically tobacco cessation. In Ajzen and Fishbein's (1980) publication of *Understanding Attitudes and Predicting Social Behavior*, several researchers used the Theory of Reasoned Action in studies related to other topics such as losing weight and family planning behaviors.

It was apparent that Ajzen and Fishbein's (1980) theory was widely used among varying topics other than study abroad. However, Ajzen and Fishbein's theory worked well to learn more

about study abroad intent and participation because of attitudes of study abroad and the social influences (subjective norm) that accompany study abroad. The intent or decision to study abroad could be linked to both attitudes as well as social influences.

### Diagram

Figure 1 below provided a visual aid in the explanation of the Theory of Reasoned Action. The Theory of Reasoned Action was seen in a way that behavior originated from behavioral beliefs. From the figure below, it was noted that behavioral beliefs influenced attitude, while normative beliefs influenced subjective norms. Both the attitude and the subjective norms influenced behavioral intention. Finally, the intent leads to the actual behavior or outcome.

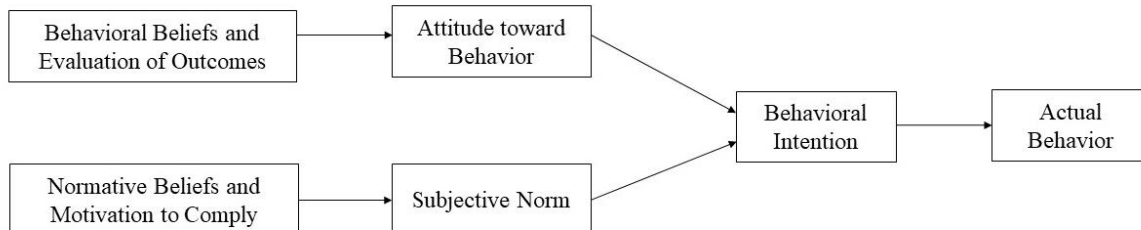


Figure 1. Theory of Reasoned Action. Ajzen and Fishbein (1980).

**Intention.** With regards to Ajzen and Fishbein’s (1980) Theory of Reasoned Action, intention could be explained as the chance that a person could act or behave in a particular way.

**Attitude and beliefs.** In Ajzen and Fishbein’s theory, attitude referred to both the positive and the negative feelings of a person that were related to taking action regarding a

behavior (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980). Attitude was the first factor that played a role in an intention to perform a behavior. Attitude was determined by behavioral beliefs and beliefs of an outcome.

Regarding behavioral beliefs and beliefs of an outcome, the way in which an individual behaved based on behavioral beliefs and beliefs of the outcome related to study abroad led to an outcome of study abroad intention. Thus, Ajzen and Fishbein (1980) found that an individual was more likely to intend to perform a behavior if the individual believed that a positive outcome would result.

**Subjective norm/normative beliefs/motivation to comply.** Subjective norm was the other factor in the Theory of Reasoned Action. Subjective norm referred to the social influences related to performing a behavior (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980). If following Figure 1 above, it was noted that normative beliefs influenced subjective norms. Beliefs a person carries with them regarding what individuals believe the original person should do about a behavior is a normative belief. The normative belief or the beliefs a person had about how others think he or she should act because of a behavior led to the subjective norm, where people were influenced by what others think about performing a behavior. Ajzen and Fishbein (1980) coupled motivation to comply of a person with normative beliefs in order to determine an individual's subjective norm.

### **Critiques and Limitations**

Although the Theory of Reasoned Action was fitting for this study, the Theory of Planned Behavior was more fitting, which this relates to the first limitation of the Theory of Reasoned Action. One limitation was suggested by Ajzen, who with Fishbein created the Theory of Reasoned Action. Ajzen created an extension of the Theory of Reasoned Action, and that extension is known today as the Theory of Planned Behavior (Sharma & Kanekar, 2007). The

extension was created because Ajzen (1991) found perceived behavior control to be missing from the Theory of Reasoned Action.

A second limitation mentioned by Sharma and Kanekar (2007) was that of the Theory of Reasoned Action not considering such variables as personality-related factors and cultural factors in behavior decisions. A third and fourth limitation were presented by Ogden. Ogden (2003) argued that the role of attitude and the role of subjective norms in the Theory of Reasoned Action may not be predictive or show low variance in a behavior. Therefore, Ogden (2003) exhibited concern as to the testability of the Theory of Reasoned Action. A final limitation declared by Ogden (2003) was that the Theory of Reasoned Action concentrated only on analytic truth, which is truth by definition and not observation. Such that behavior in the Theory of Reasoned Action was measured by self-reports and not objectively, which could be questionable.

### **Theory of Planned Behavior**

The Theory of Planned Behavior was simply an extension of Ajzen and Fishbein's (1980) Theory of Reasoned Action (Ajzen, 1991). Ajzen (1991) extended the theory to include perceived behavior control. Intentions drive the behavior, and Ajzen and Fishbein (1980) explained that the stronger or greater the intention, the more likely a certain behavior would occur. There were three variables in the Theory of Planned Behavior that drove the decision to engage in a certain behavior, and those three variables were: behavioral beliefs, normative beliefs, and control beliefs (Ajzen, 1991). The addition of control beliefs explained the difference of the Theory of Planned Behavior and the Theory of Reasoned Action. Kwan, Bray, and Martin Ginis (2009) explained that an individual's perceptions about the existence of factors that encouraged or impeded exhibiting a certain behavior and identifying the degree of control that they had over such factors was perceived behavioral control. Ajzen (1991) found perceived

behavioral control to be missing from the Theory of Reasoned Action and found it to be important, as it directed attention to the ease or difficulty one perceives of performing a certain behavior. The ease or difficulty perception of an individual was usually based off past experiences (Ajzen, 1991).

Zhuang, Weiling, King, and Carnes (2015) explained that the value perception was related to beliefs and attitudes. The choice to study abroad played into this role in that, beliefs regarding studying abroad were gained by the perceived value of studying abroad. Zhuang et al. (2015) made the observation that if the perceived behavior of studying abroad provided greater benefit than detriment, then those students had a higher likelihood to show intent to study abroad. As previously mentioned, Schnusenberg et al. (2012) used the Theory of Planned Behavior to frame a study conducted on how willingness to pay, desire, and affordability influenced intent to study abroad. Schnusenberg et al. (2012) explained that willingness to pay as one of the variables of intent to study abroad was explained by behavioral beliefs (future job prospects), normative beliefs (family expectations), and control beliefs (administrative support).

**Prior studies using the Theory of Planned Behavior.** Two prior studies that used the Theory of Planned Behavior as a framework were studies conducted by Schnusenberg et al. (2012) and Spindler (2017). Both studies focused on study abroad intent of undergraduate students.

Schnusenberg et al. (2012) used the Theory of Planned Behavior to predict study abroad intentions of 254 undergraduate business students at a university in the southern United States. The study focused specifically on short-term study abroad programs, which were defined as programs that were faculty-led and lasted 10 to 15 days in length (Schnusenberg et al., 2012). The Theory of Planned Behavior was used to identify behavioral, normative, and control beliefs



that were related to study abroad intent. Schnusenberg et al. (2012) hypothesized that study abroad intent was influenced by three variables: affordability, willingness to pay, and desire, and willingness to pay included future job prospects (behavioral beliefs), family expectations (normative beliefs), and administrative support (control beliefs) of the institution. The survey yielded results from analysis of a SEM that better helped understand the variables that influenced the decision-making process of undergraduate business students regarding intent to study abroad in a short-term study abroad program. Affordability was determined as the leading variable of intent to study abroad, as well as, other variables such as future job prospects, family expectations, and administrative support (all part of willingness to pay) influenced intent to study abroad. Thus, beliefs, such as behavior, normative, and control, influenced intent to study abroad. The detailed results of the Schnusenberg et al. (2012) study were revealed in a later chapter.

More recently Spindler (2017) conducted a study focused on the decision of study abroad intent and the actual behavior of studying abroad and used the Theory of Planned Behavior as a framework. The sample size in the study consisted of 232 undergraduate students who had declared business as a minor. Spindler (2017) hypothesized that perceptions of future job prospects, fun, family expectations, peer expectations, and administrative support drove students to study abroad, while risk aversion, being homesick, and time drove students to not study abroad. It was found from the results of a linear regression and logistic regression that perceptions of future job prospects, family expectations, being homesick, and time positively correlated with intent to study abroad rather than actually participating in the behavior of studying abroad. Thus, certain beliefs (e.g., behavioral and normative) were found to influence intent to study abroad.

The Theory of Planned Behavior had been used in studies not related to study abroad, but it had also been used to frame studies focused on advertising, public relations, information technology, and healthcare (Schnusenberg et al., 2012). In addition, Sniehotta, Pesseau, and Araujo-Soares (2014) provided that the Theory of Planned Behavior has been the leading theoretical framework for healthcare and health related behavior for the past three decades.

### Diagram

Figure 2 below was Ajzen's (1991) Theory of Planned Behavior. The diagram looks very similar to the Theory of Reasoned Action, and it is with one exception, the addition of perceived behavioral control. Perceived behavior control was the one addition that Ajzen (1991) added to the Theory of Reasoned Action to create the Theory of Planned Behavior.

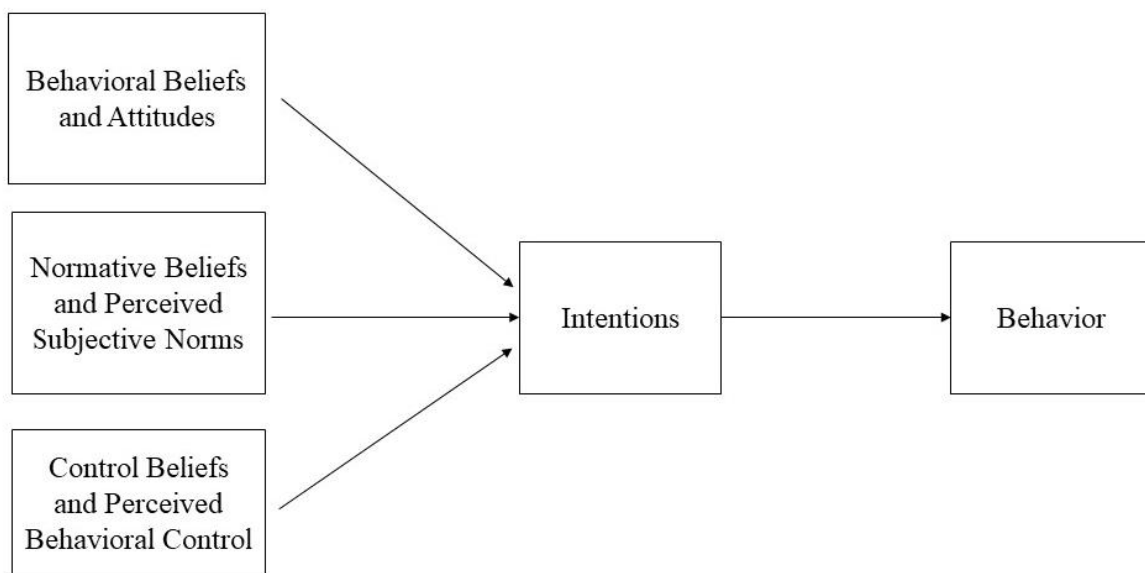


Figure 2. Theory of Planned Behavior. Ajzen (1991).

**Behavioral beliefs.** Ajzen (1991) explained that behavioral beliefs were a person's perception of if a behavior would influence an outcome and to what degree. Schnusenberg et al. (2012) made it clear that behavioral beliefs were tied to one's personal objectives and if the outcome of the behavior would help attain the personal objectives. This study used future job prospects as a behavioral belief of students in this study to determine the importance of study abroad related to future job prospects.

**Normative beliefs.** "Normative beliefs are the beliefs a person has about what certain people or groups think he or she should do regarding a behavior" (Phillips, 2014, p. 18). Ajzen (1991) made it clear that individuals find significance in individuals such as family members such as family and spouses and also teachers. This study used family expectations as the normative beliefs. Caulfield (2010) made it clear that 50% of graduate students were married. So, family in this case could refer to both parents or spouses, which one or both could have an influence on graduate students because according to Terry and Hogg (2000), norms had a greater affect and influence when individuals had a strong connection with their group. Regarding family as the normative beliefs in this study, family was not specifically defined in this study. Thus, it was important for participants and others interested in gaining information from this study to interpret family as they saw fit and define family based on what family means to each participant individually.

**Control beliefs.** Kwan, Bray, and Martin Ginis (2009) explained that an individual's perceptions about the existence of factors that encouraged or impeded exhibiting a certain behavior and identifying the degree of control that they had over such factors was perceived behavioral control. Ajzen (1991) explained that control beliefs directed attention to the ease or difficulty one perceived of performing a certain behavior. A prime example of control beliefs

related to study abroad was administrative support, such as how helpful study abroad professionals and faculty were at institutions.

### **Critique and Limitations**

Sniehotta et al. (2014) criticized the Theory of Planned Behavior indicating that, “The balance between parsimony and validity had been questioned...” (p. 2). Further, Sheeran, Gollwitzer, and Bargh (2013) explained Sniehotta et al.’s (2014) prior criticism in that the Theory of Planned Behavior focused solely on rational reasoning and not unconscious influences of behavior with a lack of understanding of future behavior (McEachan, Conner, Taylor, & Lawton, 2011).

Sniehotta et al. (2014) continued in that the Theory of Planned Behavior shared a similar limitation to that of the Theory of Reasoned Action in that there were limits in predicting validity of the theory. The Theory of Reasoned Action focused on self-reporting and not observed behavior, which the theory did not allow for variability in observed behaviors. In addition, Carraro and Gaudreau (2013) found that planning, a self-regulating behavior, could influence or even predict behavior greater than the measures used in the Theory of Planned Behavior. Sniehotta et al. (2014) suggested that self-determination, anticipated regret, and identity all played a role in predicting behavior beyond the measures used in the Theory of Planned Behavior.

### **Variables Selected for Current Study**

Although the Theory of Reasoned Action and the Theory of Planned Behavior had been previously used in several prior studies regarding study abroad, the specific variables chosen for this study were taken from a recent study conducted by Schnusenberget al. (2012) on undergraduate business students. Thus, the hypotheses in this study suggested that the

components of the Theory of Planned Behavior were related to the selected variables in Schnusenberg et al.'s (2012) study and were important regarding study abroad intent among graduate students in HESA programs. Thus, the contribution of using such variables was to see if similar results were obtained on graduate students in HESA programs across the southeastern United States as on undergraduate students in another discipline, business.

### **Predicting Study Abroad Intentions**

As previously mentioned, the Theory of Planned Behavior was an extension of the Theory of Reasoned Action (Ajzen, 1991). However, more recently the Theory of Planned Behavior not only included a relationship of behavioral beliefs, normative beliefs, and control beliefs to behavioral intentions and actual behavior (Figure 2), but scholars, after the origin of the Theory of Planned Behavior, suggested that the relationships of each of the variables were mediated. A prior study conducted by Lombardi et al. (2016) found that beliefs and intentions in general were mediated by a variable used in this study, willingness to pay, which relates to study abroad. Huang and Chen (2015) found that beliefs and intentions were mediated by another variable, desire, which was used in this study. Finally, Nabi and Holden (2008) found that beliefs and intentions were mediated by affordability, another variable also used in this study.

In this study, willingness to pay was explained by behavioral beliefs, normative beliefs, and control beliefs. Presley, Damron-Martinez, and Zhang (2010) used the same three beliefs in a study conducted to explore intent to study abroad. In this study the behavioral beliefs were future job prospects, the normative beliefs were family expectations, and the control beliefs were administrative support. Each of the beliefs and other variables such as willingness to pay, desire, and affordability were further discussed next. So, in this study, the mediating variables (willingness to pay, desire, and affordability) were used in the suggested model.

## Model Suggestion

Future researchers would benefit from a model combining the Theory of Reasoned Action (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980), Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991), and what we currently know about the factors of study abroad intent. Below, I highlighted literature related to study abroad to support and contextualize the proposed model for this study. The model could be used when exploring study abroad intent of not only graduate students but undergraduate students, as well. There is a visual aid, Figure 3, that indicated how each variable was related. This model showed the hypothesized relationships between each variable. It is important to understand the suggested model, as the current study used the model to later analyze the variables that influenced intent to study abroad. Implications were determined from the analysis and created strategies for institutions to design effective study abroad programs for graduate students. For example, if graduate students found value in future job prospects from studying abroad, then a focus of a graduate preparation program in HESA may be tailored to focus deeper on practicum requirements.

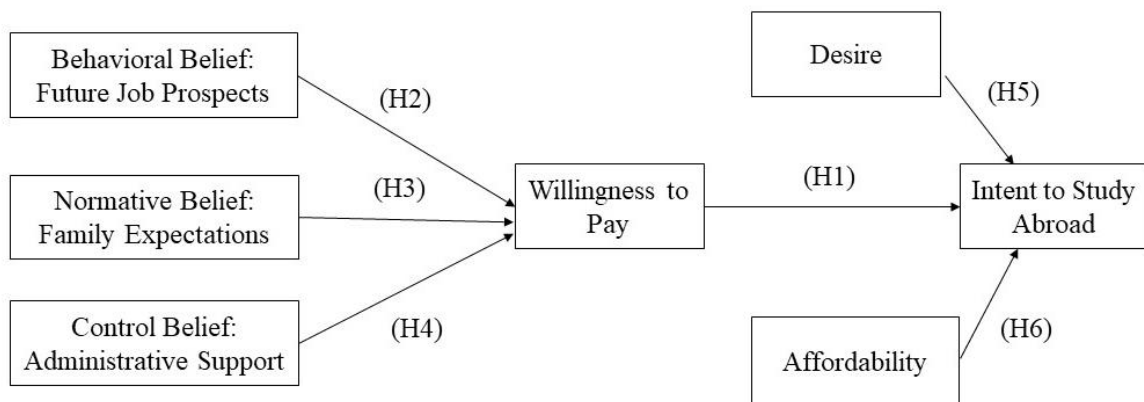


Figure 3. Suggested model. Suggested model indicated six hypotheses (H1, H2, H3, H4, H5, H6). Adapted and used with permission from Schnusenberget al. (2012).

## **Study Abroad Beliefs Influencing Willingness to Pay**

**Willingness to pay.** Schnusenberg et al. (2012) stated, “Willingness to pay reflects a cognitive decision made by an individual when forming an intention” (p. 341). A prior study previously mentioned, Lombardi et al. (2016), supported that a person’s beliefs were related to willingness to pay dependent upon the value of the actual behavior. To emphasize again, beliefs (behavioral, normative, and control) and intentions were mediated by willingness to pay, which was supported by the study of Lombardi et al. (2016). Before this study, a study conducted by Schnusenberg et al. (2012) used the variable willingness to pay to see how it influenced study abroad intent. Schnusenberg et al. (2012) found that willingness to pay positively influenced students’ intent to study abroad. Willingness to pay was a variable that should not be overlooked in a study that was focusing on study abroad intent, as it has rarely been used in the past, but since its use, it had been found to be a positive influence to study abroad intent, as the impact from studying abroad could create lifetime benefits (Richardson et al., 2014).

Willingness to pay is a cognitive decision, such as a decision of study abroad intent. However, Schnusenberg et al. (2012) continued noting that dependent upon access to certain resources and the willingness of a person to use the certain resources, that defined willingness to pay. Zhuang et al. (2015) noted that if studying abroad provided greater benefit (future professional advancement) than detriment (finances to study abroad), then those students had a higher likelihood to show intent to study abroad. Thus, a benefit of studying abroad was recognized by an individual and seen as valuable even if a constraint such as finances was present. So, willingness to pay regarding study abroad intent could be high, even when resources, such as finances to study abroad were lacking (Schnusenberg et al., 2012). So, H1, “HESA graduate students’ willingness to pay for study abroad programs will be positively related to their

intent to study abroad,” was formed based off a graduate student perceiving the value of study abroad to be higher than the perceived detriments.

***Future job prospects.*** Students could find certain values or benefits in studying abroad, such as value related to a study abroad experience benefitting them in a future job. Curtis and Ledgerwood (2018) informed that if students perceived value from studying abroad related to future jobs, then favorable attitudes were formed of study abroad. Planning and thinking ahead while a graduate student to a future career could be very beneficial. For example, Dwyer (2004) explained that there were differences of professions in varying cultures, and noting and obtaining cross-cultural skills through study abroad tied in to later professional success as having been exposed to an environment that would increase the effectiveness of the professional. To continue, Orahood, Kruze, and Pearson (2004) conducted a study regarding career marketability comparing students that had and students that had not studied abroad. Orahood et al. (2004) distributed a survey to 198 junior and senior undergraduate students. It was determined that the students who had studied abroad would benefit and be more marketable during the job search (Orahood et al., 2004). In addition, Curran (2007) explained that employers did not always highly value the cross-cultural skills gained from an abroad experience but were focused on skills such as motivation, initiative, and flexibility, which all could be gained extensively through study abroad experiences.

In addition, Bandyopadhyay and Bandyopadhyay (2016) performed a study at two mid-sized regional state institutions to present why 244 undergraduate and graduate business students indicated that they study abroad. Bandyopadhyay and Bandyopadhyay (2016) found that professional development was one reason to study abroad, which gaining of professional development skills was useful for future job prospects.



Based on the recent initiatives to internationalize the educational leadership discipline, which included HESA (Bogotch and Maslin-Ostrowski, 2010), then graduate students pursuing a graduate degree in HESA could find value in studying abroad regarding future job prospects. So, graduate students could have a higher willingness to pay regarding study abroad intent if seen to benefit students professionally in future jobs. Thus, H2 was formed: “HESA graduate students’ behavioral beliefs of future job prospects related to study abroad programs will be positively related to their willingness to pay.”

**Family expectations.** Family expectations influenced intent to study abroad. Sanchez et al. (2006) found that students in not only the United States but also France and China struggled with familial expectations regarding going abroad or not. Regarding the students in the United States, students that experienced rather high familial expectations related to studying abroad found that this new experience or opportunity was affected (Sanchez et al., 2006).

Much of the previous literature on study abroad related to family expectations focused on undergraduate students. However, family expectations of graduate students existed, as well. According to several scholars (Brus, 2006; Nelson, Dell’Oliver, Koch, & Buckler, 2001), prior studies conducted on family expectations of graduate students have found that family expectations very well influence decisions, both positively and negatively. The prior studies did not focus on decisions regarding study abroad intent of graduate students pursuing a graduate degree in HESA. The prior studies focused particularly on graduate students in psychology and social work programs. With the lack of literature regarding study abroad intent of graduate students and particularly graduate students in an educational leadership discipline, this study focused on how the family expectations drove the normative beliefs of graduate students in HESA programs regarding study abroad intent.

It is likely that graduate students would be positively influenced by family to intend to study abroad due to the value added benefits of such an experience. Communicating the perceived benefits of study abroad, such as professional benefits of future job prospects, to family, then there could be an increase in willingness to pay of students. Thus, a H3 was developed: “HESA graduate students’ normative beliefs of family expectations of study abroad programs will be positively related to their willingness to pay.”

***Administrative support.*** A study regarding institution communication on student study abroad participation was completed by the University of California Education Abroad Program in 2011. Learning how students gained insight and information on study abroad programs and experiences at the particular university was a mission of the office that hosted study abroad programs. A comparison of students that had studied abroad and those that had not studied abroad found that those that studied abroad made that decision based upon insight gained from past participants and faculty and staff on campus (University of California Education Abroad Program, 2011). According to Curtis and Ledgerwood (2018), educators should be knowledgeable about the constraints (lack of knowledge) related to study abroad because well-planned short-term experiences abroad positively impact graduate students (Richardson et al., 2014). With that, institutions, faculty, and staff all play an important role in the administrative support of students to decrease the lack of knowledge among students of study abroad opportunities. A student could have more of a willingness to pay to study abroad with administrative support from the institution. Thus H4 was developed: “HESA graduate students’ control beliefs of administrative support of study abroad programs will be positively related to their willingness to pay.”

## **Desire**

A mediating variable in the Theory of Planned Behavior that influenced intent of a behavior was desire. Desire included the emotions and feelings that one had towards a behavior or a behavior intent, and as previously mentioned, desire was mediated by a belief that influenced an intent (Huang & Chen, 2015). Even with the value added benefits previously mentioned regarding study abroad, some students may not have a desire to gain the benefits from studying abroad or have no interest in learning about a new culture or gaining foreign language exposure. So, H5 was created: “HESA graduate students’ desire to participate in study abroad programs will be positively related to their intent to study abroad.”

## **Affordability**

A final variable that influenced intent was affordability. Gordon, Patterson, and Cherry (2014) completed a study that focused on desiring undergraduate and graduate students in the business field to gain global experience prior to graduating. Gordon et al. (2014) noted finances as a barrier, which was the most significant barrier of student participation in study abroad opportunities. Gordon et al. (2014) continued that opportunity cost included the loss of income in that one cannot work while studying abroad; therefore, income was lost during the study abroad experience. The high cost to study abroad alone could be the deciding factor as to if one does study abroad.

It was evidenced that cost of study abroad influenced study abroad intent, regardless of being an undergraduate or graduate student. Schnusenberg et al. (2012) defined affordability as “an economic consideration of the financial capacity of an individual to participate in a study abroad program” (p. 344). Affordability and willingness to pay were different in that

affordability was focused upon financial costs, and willingness to pay was focused on the perceived value of studying abroad.

There were several studies that mentioned finances as a barrier of studying abroad. Three studies that focused on finances as a barrier observed students in New Zealand, Canada, the United States, France, and China (Doyle et al., 2010; Sanchez et al., 2006; Trilokekar & Rasmi, 2011). Nabi and Holden (2008) explained that “perceived feasibility (for example, lack of finance...)” (p. 548) were used to predict intentions. Thus, the Theory of Planned Behavior “...could be extended to incorporate economic factors” (Schnusenberg et al., 2012, p. 343). This indicated H6: “HESA graduate students’ perceptions of affordability of study abroad programs will be positively related to their intent to study abroad.”

### **Limitations of Suggested Model**

As previously mentioned, there were several limitations of the Theory of Reasoned Action and Theory of Planned Behavior. Even with a proposed or suggested model using the Theory of Planned Behavior and applying it to study abroad, limitations still existed. The use of the Theory of Planned Behavior to determine the relationship of certain variables and the intent to study abroad was used in this study.

Sniehotta et al. (2014) explained a limitation of the Theory of Planned Behavior to be that there were limits in predicting validity of the theory. The Theory of Planned Behavior focused on self-reporting and not observed behavior, which the theory did not allow for variability in observed behaviors. Not only was it important to show that study abroad intent was testable in this study using the Theory of Planned Behavior, but also showing that behavior could be measured and concluded through self-reporting, which was how intent to study abroad was measured in this study.

Based on the use of the Theory of Planned Behavior for this study, it was important to address and focus attention on the insight of comments from Ajzen and Fishbein regarding select limitations. Ajzen and Fishbein (2004) provided understanding that behavior measured by self-reports was acceptable. Ajzen and Fishbein (2004) explained that obtaining objective measurement of behavioral intention could be impossible, incredibly expensive, and very time consuming; thus, self-reporting was an appropriate way to measure behavioral intention. The prior literature regarding the Theory of Planned Behavior was used in this study, and the theory was tailored to meet the needs of this study focused on predicting the intent of short-term study abroad of graduate students in a HESA program using the variables of willingness to pay, desire, and affordability.

### **Conclusion**

The theoretical framework and its relevance to this study was outlined in the chapter showcasing that beliefs and intent were mediated by three variables: willingness to pay, desire, and affordability, and willingness to pay was influenced by future job prospects, family expectations, and administrative support. The study abroad literature and prior studies regarding study abroad intent focused mostly on undergraduate students. There had been some investigations of the variables that mediated the relationship of beliefs and intent, but those studies did not focus on study abroad. With that, this study was one of the first of its kind to focus on such variables and solely on graduate students in an educational leadership focus of HESA, making it a particularly unique and promising contribution to study abroad and HESA literatures.

This manuscript used studies to explain factors, beliefs, and intentions of study abroad, and of the studies, few of the mentioned remarked about graduate students. However, it was

important to note that of the few studies, when graduate students were mentioned, a couple of studies incorporated them as part of a study that included undergraduates. One recent study that was focused solely on graduate students, its goal was to learn the factors of why graduate students pursuing a master degree in Malaysia chose the country and higher education institution they did in order to study abroad (Singh, 2016). Thus, the literature or prior research rarely did focus on exclusively graduate students, and this study was unique because it addressed study abroad of graduate students by using a quantitative method or more specifically a survey to collect and analyze data.

## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to investigate intent to study abroad among graduate students in HESA programs. With most attention on undergraduate students related to intent to study abroad, this study gave an opportunity to predict intent to study abroad of a select group of graduate students in an education related field. The theoretical framework focused on values gained from study abroad and other motivators of study abroad. With limited graduate student data related to study abroad, this study provided useful information on study abroad intent related specifically to graduate students pursuing a graduate degree in HESA. In addition, this study broadly benefitted a group of study abroad programs in the United States in that the data gathered would assist in creation and enhancement of study abroad opportunities aimed specifically at graduate students. The methodology and framework could be used in other subject disciplines and regions in the United States to better understand graduate student interest in study abroad at their home institutions, which would enhance appropriate program design that could increase study abroad intent and participation.

The research questions that guiding this study were: (1) What is the relationship between HESA graduate students' intent to study abroad and their: (a) willingness to pay; (b) desire to participate in study abroad programs; and (c) perception of affordability of study abroad programs?; and (2) What is the relationship between HESA graduate

students' willingness to pay for study abroad and their: (a) behavioral beliefs (future job prospects); (b) normative beliefs (family expectations); and (c) control beliefs (administrative support)? Since the questions of this study were focused on the relationship of variables, then the most effective and appropriate method was using a quantitative research approach, specifically a SEM. The program, AMOS (Analysis of Moments Structure), used to evaluate a SEM included both a measurement and structural model (Goel, de Jong, & Schnusenber, 2010). The measurement model represented the proposed relationships among the observed and latent variables, and the structural model represented the relationship among the latent variables (Goel et al., 2010).

The epistemology chosen to conduct this study was described. In addition, the methods that were used to collect data, as well as the methods that were used to analyze the data was further explained in this chapter.

## **Epistemological Orientation**

### **Post-Positivism**

I conducted this study, guided by a post-positivist perspective. Sharp et al. (2011) stated that a positivist approach was traditional and evidence-based. Sharp et al. (2011) continued, "...post-positivists seek to 'deconstruct' concepts and decision processes in order to understand backgrounds, values and contexts that influence outcomes" (p. 501). A quantitative dataset was gathered to forecast graduate students in study abroad. Crotty (1998) further explained post-positivism as unambiguous and accurate knowledge. Further, it was important in a quantitative study to ensure the results were reliable. Merriam (2002) defined reliability as "...the extent to which research findings can be



replicated” (p. 27). Using a survey, it was possible to replicate by administering it again to a similar group of people.

As with any epistemology, there were challenges, limitations, and critiques. The first challenge or limitation was that in post-positivism the research is not specific but rather broad (Ryan, 2006). This means that in this particular study, it could be hard to narrow down the variables of study abroad that lead to graduate student intent to study abroad. This could limit the findings and knowledge in knowing which variables carry the most weight in intent to study abroad. A second challenge was a finding indicated by Ryan (2006),

Researchers can still find it difficult to get funding for post-positive projects. The mechanistic view of the natural sciences continues to dominate the public perception of science, and in turn it affects views of what social research should be (p. 17-18).

With that and limited funding for post-positive projects, that could create a challenge when trying to implement study abroad opportunities and encouragement of more graduate students to study abroad. Funding is needed in order to enhance and improve study abroad to improve graduate student intent and participation numbers. A third and final challenge was that as a post-positivist researcher, Agar (1988) stated, “the researcher assumes a learning role rather than a testing one” (as cited in Ryan, 2006, p. 18). So post-positivism is about problem-setting rather than problem solving (Ryan, 2006). This means that “research can be about problem setting – coming up with the right questions” (Ryan, 2006, p. 19). Coming up with the exact right research questions to gain

future knowledge regarding a subject matter such as intent to study abroad could be challenging.

With regards to the major critique of post-positivism, "...we cannot simply aggregate data in order to arrive at an overall 'truth'...[rather post-positivist researchers] recognise the complexity of the web of life and experience" (Ryan, 2006, p. 19).

Therefore, this critique helped this study in the understanding that the choice to engage in graduate study abroad was complex and all answers to the subject would not be addressed in this study. While the results of this study could help to answer some of the questions concerning the phenomenon (of whether graduate students engage in study abroad), there would still be aspects that must be addressed that graduate students encounter, which means further research in the area, since the focus of graduate students and study abroad is not the prime focus of study abroad literature. So, with post-positivism, the findings in this study can lead to future research in the area.

Table 1

*Institution Information*

Institution Name	Type and Location	Survey Responses
Arkansas Tech University	Public university in Russellville, AR	16
Florida International University	Metropolitan, public, research university in Miami, FL	9
Florida State University	Public, space-grant, sea-grant research university in Tallahassee, FL	20
University of Georgia	Public, flagship, land-grant, research university in Athens, GA	2
Mississippi State University	Public, land-grant, research university in Mississippi State, MS	14
University of Mississippi	Public, flagship, research university in University, MS	12
Appalachian State University	Public university in Boone, NC	9
University of North Carolina at Charlotte	Public, research university in Charlotte, NC	7
Clemson University	Public, land-grant, research university in Clemson, SC	46
Baylor University	Private, Christian university in Waco, TX	6
Sam Houston State University	Public university in Huntsville, TX	6
University of Houston	Public, research university in Houston, TX	10
University of Texas at Austin	Public, flagship, research university in Austin, TX	8
George Mason University	Public, research university in Fairfax, VA	2
James Madison University	Public, research university in Harrisonburg, VA	4

*Note.* The 15 institutions listed represented the institutions that the participants attended. The table described a snapshot of each of the institutions. The number listed under survey responses was the number of participants from each institution.

## Site Description

To test the hypotheses and find answers to the research questions, students pursuing a graduate degree in HESA at an institution in the southeastern United States were surveyed. More specifically, there were 15 institutions (Table 1) that served as the sites for the study. The institutions selected were the institutions that were registered with the Southern Association for College Student Affairs (SACSA). SACSA is a regional professional organization for HESA educators in the southeastern United States. The organization provides professional development in the HESA area to professionals, practitioners, and students in the field (SACSA, 2018). Higher education institutions in the southeastern United States were the sample of choice because study abroad participant numbers were underrepresented in the southeastern United States. Only two institutions (Texas A&M University and University of Texas-Austin) of the leading 10 institutions in the southeastern United States regarding number of participants that study abroad were included (IIE, 2016). Thus, the presence of study abroad at institutions in the Southeast was far less.

With such a strategy to target study abroad at southeastern United States institutions, purposive sampling was chosen for this study. Purposive sampling is a sample that was chosen due to certain characteristics of a population and a sample chosen to meet the aim of the study (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016). In this study, participants that were of graduate status in a HESA graduate program at one of 15 institutions in the southeastern United States were the particular characteristics that were required of the participants, which represented the target population for this study.

Each of the 15 institutions were located in the southeastern part of the United States with all institutions at least offering HESA graduate degree preparation programs. The 15 institutions did not represent all the institutions that were part of SACSA. There were 72 institutions, all located in the southeastern United States, that were a part of SACSA. According to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Mississippi State University, it was a requirement to get permission from IRB offices at each of the institutions in which one wished to collect data. After contacting all 72 institutions, I received positive responses from IRB offices allowing data collection from 22 institutions with HESA graduate programs. Of the 72 institutions, several institutions' IRB offices did not respond to my request about collecting data, a few IRB offices declined data collection at their institutions, and the remainder of the institutions had a rather strict IRB approval process in order to collect data. Thus, 22 out of 72 institutions (30%) were selected as the sites. However, only 15 institutions responded to the survey, as only 15 of the 22 program coordinators contacted at each of the institutions sent the survey to their students.

The 15 institutions are listed below:

1. Arkansas Tech University
2. Florida International University
3. Florida State University
4. University of Georgia
5. Mississippi State University
6. University of Mississippi
7. Appalachian State University

8. University of North Carolina at Charlotte
9. Clemson University
10. Baylor University
11. Sam Houston State University
12. University of Houston
13. University of Texas at Austin
14. George Mason University
15. James Madison University

### **Sample**

The vast majority of the research had been focused on undergraduate students and their perceptions of study abroad, which made sense, given the previously cited results that graduate student study abroad accounted for a small and decreasing portion (12%) of the population of study abroad participants each year (IIE, 2017). The literature on study abroad generally had not included graduate students. In order to create a better understanding of graduate students' perceptions of study abroad, this study focused solely on graduate students pursuing a graduate degree in HESA. The focus of this study regarding study abroad and specifically graduate students in HESA was due to the push within the last 25 years to internationalize the higher education curriculum. "As internationalization accelerates on U.S. campuses, administrators rely on student affairs and student services personnel to do more—not only to serve more international students, but to help all students develop global and intercultural competencies" (ACE, 2016, p. 1). It was clear that the professions of HESA were needed to make contributions and play a vital role in campus internationalization.

The population was graduate students at institutions located within the southeastern United States. The institutions targeted were institutions that were part of SACSA's graduate school directory with graduate programs in HESA. The target population for this study was to reach at least 230 graduate students at the selected institutions in the Southeast and exceed 115 participants in the study, presuming a response rate of 50%. The reason as to strive for at least 115 participants was because Ding, Velicer, and Harlow (1995) agreed after reviewing several studies that a minimum sample size for SEMs was 100 to 150 participants.

IRBs approve research studies conducted on human subjects. The IRB at Mississippi State University gave approval, as the study focused on human subjects. The required IRB procedures from start to finish were followed. During the recruitment phase of the study, the participants were informed that the study was voluntary and that minimal risks were involved regarding participation. Also, the participants were informed that neither identifying information nor real names would be used in the final report.

The term "study abroad" as defined in Chapter 1 was indicated at the beginning of the survey to help the participants best answer each question. To reiterate, the definition of study abroad for this study was a short-term experience traveling abroad outside the United States to gain a cultural and educational experience using practice and applied learning to gain skills that were useful upon returning to the United States and could be used in future interviews specific to graduate students in HESA fields.

### **Instrument**

The instrument used was a questionnaire or more specifically a 31-question survey based from a questionnaire used by Schnusenberg et al. (2012). Schnusenberg et

al. (2012) conducted a study to predict the intent to study abroad of undergraduate business students. The study of Schnusenberg et al. (2012) was framed using the Theory of Planned Behavior, and the variables used to influence intent to study abroad were desire, willingness to pay, and affordability. Willingness to pay was explained by three variables: future job prospects, family expectations, and administrative support. Schnusenberg et al. (2012) presented evidence in support of the validity of the survey, obtained via a pilot study. After the pilot test was conducted, Schnusenberg et al. (2012) used the survey to predict undergraduate business students' intent to study abroad.

Since the survey of Schnusenberg et al. (2012) was directed to undergraduate business students, the questions, for use in this study, were slightly tailored to focus on graduate students in an education discipline. The major change to several of the questions was adding the words "in graduate school" to the questions. Not all questions warranted an addition of the words "in graduate school" but several did. Also, the original survey used a 5-point Likert type scale, and for this study, the scale was altered to a 7-point Likert type scale. A 7-point scale offered more potential variation for responses (Rahem & Darrah, 2018). Thus, using a 7-point scale gave the participants an opportunity to answer on extreme ends, which is true of all scales with more than two options. Boari and Ruscone (2015) explained central tendency bias can occur, meaning that participants have a tendency to avoid using extreme response categories. Even so, it was the researcher's choice to use a 7-point scale and was believed it would be beneficial to have the potential for greater variation among the results and an option to mark an answer on an extreme end, should a participant feel very strongly about a question.



Norman (2010) explained that variation or variance from a Likert-type scale was usually used to explore the disagreement among the variables, and this was important in this study, which was exploring the relationships. Norman (2010) and Gardner (1975) informed that Likert-type scales were used to measure preferences. In this study, a Likert-type scale was used, and the seven response option descriptors used were Strongly Agree, Agree, Slightly Agree, Neutral, Slightly Disagree, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree. In conclusion, with slight wording and number of Likert descriptors used from the original surveys changed, there was more uniformity across the overall survey and measures of the original version of the survey.

In addition to the 31 questions on the survey, the very first question was a consent question followed by two identifying questions which asked if the individual completing the survey was a graduate student at an institution in the southeastern United States pursuing a graduate degree in HESA, and the second identifier question asked the participant to list the university that they attended. Following the two identifier questions, there were 31 questions related to beliefs and intent to study abroad. Following, the end of the survey contained 11 demographic questions including: previous participation in a study abroad program, currently or previously studied a foreign language, degree seeking, year in program, program type, identification of self, description of self, age, marital status, children in family, and employment status. Regarding the questions about identification of self and description of self, there was an opportunity to select one or multiple answers, depending on how the participants identified regarding the questions. Also, there was an opportunity to select an option “prefer not to answer,” should any participant have felt uncomfortable answering what could be three sensitive questions

concerning how one identified (male, female, gender nonconforming, transgender, or other), how the participants described themselves (American Indian or Alaskan Native, Asian, Black or African American, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, White, or other), and marital status. In conclusion, the participants were asked to list their email address at the very end of the survey in order to be included in the gift card drawing. A deeper explanation was provided later in this chapter. The survey used in this study was included in Appendix C.

## **Variables**

From the two research questions and six hypotheses, several of the scores collected were treated as independent variables and a couple were treated as dependent variables. Since desire, willingness to pay, and affordability influenced intent to study abroad, then desire, willingness to pay, and affordability were all treated as independent variables, while intent to study abroad was treated as a dependent variable. Next, future job prospects (behavioral beliefs), family expectations (normative beliefs), and administrative support (control beliefs) were all treated as independent variables of willingness to pay, which was treated as a dependent variable.

## **Method**

### **Data Collection Method**

Data were collected over a four-week period, ranging from late March 2019 to late April 2019, using SurveyMonkey.

I gained IRB approval to collect data from 22 institutions that had HESA graduate programs. I contacted via email the program coordinator(s) of the HESA program at each

of the 22 institutions to request each forward the recruitment email with the link to the survey to the graduate students in the HESA graduate programs at their institution. Of the 22 institutions, 15 program coordinators responded and sent out the survey. All graduate students were informed that in exchange for completing the survey, they would be entered into a drawing for a chance to receive one of two \$100 Amazon gift cards. The participants were asked to provide their email address at the end of the survey, as two email addresses were randomly selected to be the prize winners after the survey closed. The two winners of the gift cards were notified via email.

The goal was to obtain at least 115 usable responses to the survey as distributed to 15 institutions in the southeastern United States. The survey was distributed and emailed to the students over a four-week period. The survey was created on SurveyMonkey, which indicated that the survey was administered online. Participants had to be of graduate status at the selected institutions in the southeastern United States and be enrolled in a graduate program in HESA. Each qualification of the participants had to be met for the participants to participate.

The results obtained were used to analyze the fit of the data to the proposed SEM. A figure (Figure 3) of the model was included in Chapter 2. IRB required that all responses be anonymous and not include any type of information to identify the individual participants in the final results. The participants were informed of the confidentiality of the final report, which did not include the names of any participants. In fact, the only identifying information collected from the participants was an email address to be included in the gift card drawing and to ensure that the survey was not completed more than once by a participant.

The final number of those that completed the survey was 184, and 171 responses were usable by meeting the two criteria: (a) completing the survey; and (b) respondent indicating that s/he was enrolled in a graduate degree program in HESA. Descriptive statistics of the usable sample were given in Chapter 4.

**Data organization.** Data were organized prior to conducting the SEM. All data collected were observed to ensure that each data point was usable in the analysis and final results. First and foremost, in order for the responses to be included in the results, the participants had to be of graduate student status in a HESA program at one of the 15 participating institutions in the southeastern United States. If the requirements were not met to participate in the study, the data from those such surveys were removed from the analysis and results. In addition, only surveys that were fully completed were included in the analysis. Data collected from partially completed surveys were not included in the analysis, as missing data for certain questions could skew the final results.

The collected data were stored in one location. Any data collected through SurveyMonkey were stored on the researcher's SurveyMonkey account. The SurveyMonkey account is password protected. Thus, the raw data were only able to be viewed by the researcher.

The only identifying information collected on the survey was the email address of each participant. The email address of each participant was collected for two reasons: to ensure that no participant completed the survey more than once and to be entered in to the Amazon gift card drawing, if desired by the participant. No identifier or email address was used in the final report. All responses stayed anonymous.

Upon completion of this study and upon publication of the study, the online collected data will remain in the researcher's SurveyMonkey account for one year after publication. After the study has been published for one year, then all data will be properly discarded through deletion of the SurveyMonkey account.

## **Data Analysis**

Usable data were taken from 171 surveys. The surveys that were unable to be used were surveys that were not fully completed or completed by participants not classified as a graduate student in HESA. The survey data were analyzed using an inferential statistics approach with mention of the descriptive statistics. Tables and several Figures were provided in Chapter 4 to showcase the statistical results.

After the data were collected using SurveyMonkey, the data were exported in to SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) and then in to AMOS, which is a program that evaluates SEMs to analyze the data to test certain hypotheses. In order to best answer the two research questions, the data were analyzed using a SEM. SEMs were conducted to show the strength and variance among the variables: intent to study abroad, willingness to pay, affordability, desire, future job prospects, family expectations, and administrative support.

SEMs show the variance among the variables. According to Schnusenberg et al. (2012),

As a structural equation modeling technique, AMOS differentiates between a measurement and a structural model. Whereas the measurement model analyzes the relationship between the latent constructs and their associated items by scrutinizing their internal, convergent, and discriminant validity, the structural

model estimates the strength of the relationship between latent constructs by providing estimates for path coefficients, variance explained, and fit indices. (p. 346)

Previous work established the scales (e.g., behavioral beliefs of future job prospects) by previously conducting a SEM; however, a measurement model was tested in this study for confirmation. Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was conducted prior to conducting a SEM. “CFA permits evaluating the adequacy of a proposed factor structure” (Strauss, Thompson, Adams, Redline, & Burant, 2000, p. 203). There were 31 observed variables with seven latent variables. As a reminder, the seven latent variables were: future job prospects, family expectations, and administrative support, willingness to pay, desire, affordability, and intent to study abroad. On the survey (Appendix C), questions 4-9 represented intent to study abroad and were combined into single scores, questions 10-12 represented willingness to pay and were combined into single scores, questions 13-15 represented affordability and were combined into single scores, questions 16-21 represented desire and were combined into single scores, questions 22-24 represented future job prospects and were combined into single scores, questions 25-27 represented family expectations and were combined into single scores, and questions 28-34 represented administrative support and were combined into single scores (Table 2).

Table 2

*Final Survey Instrument*

Latent Variable	Survey Item	Variable
Intent to Study Abroad	I intend to participate in study abroad in graduate school.	Intent1
	I plan to go on a study abroad program in graduate school.	Intent2
	It is my intention to participate in a study abroad program in graduate school.	Intent3
	I aim to go on a study abroad program in graduate school.	Intent4
	I mean to participate in a study abroad program in graduate school.	Intent5
	I am determined to go on a study abroad program in graduate school.	Intent6
Willingness to Pay	Even if I can afford to spend on study abroad programs, I will not do so.	WTP1
	I do not think study abroad programs are worth it.	WTP2
	I would not pay for a study abroad program even if I could.	WTP3
Affordability	Participating in a study abroad program is within my financial means.	Afford1
	I can afford to participate in a study abroad program.	Afford2
	Study abroad programs are too expensive for me.	Afford3
Desire	I would like to participate in a study abroad program in graduate school.	Desire1
	I wish to go on a study abroad program in graduate school.	Desire2
	I desire to go on a study abroad program in graduate school.	Desire3
	I aspire to go on a study abroad program in graduate school.	Desire4
	I am eager to go on a study abroad program in graduate school.	Desire5
	Study abroad programs are attractive to me.	Desire6

Table 2 (continued)

Latent Variable	Survey Item	Variable
Job Prospects	Studying abroad will give me a competitive advantage in the job market.	Job1
	Skills obtained through study abroad would allow me to advance in my career at a greater pace.	Job2
	A study abroad program will help me achieve my professional goals quicker.	Job3
Family Expectations	My family encourages me to go on study abroad programs.	FamEx1
	My family thinks that a study abroad programs is valuable for my personal development.	FamEx2
	My family thinks that a study abroad program is valuable for my professional development.	FamEx3
Administrative Support	My university's study abroad office appears to care for my safety while abroad.	Admin1
	The faculty on the study abroad programs seem to have the knowledge to lead me on the program.	Admin2
	My university's study abroad office and staff has a good reputation.	Admin3
	My university's study abroad staff seems helpful in providing necessary information.	Admin4
	My university's study abroad study abroad staff seems adept in dealing with problems.	Admin5
	My university's professors seem qualified at leading study abroad programs.	Admin6
	My university seems to have the required expertise for study abroad programs.	Admin7

*Note.* The 31 survey items and variables listed were the observed variables. Each of the observed variables were answered by participants using a Likert-scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Adapted and used with permission by Schnusenberg et al. (2012).



In addition, with SEMs, certain fit indicators and certain levels established indicate good or satisfactory model-data fit. Two measures of fit that were used were Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) and Goodness of Fit index (GFI). MacCallum, Browne, and Sugawara (1996) emphasized that a value less than .10 indicated an acceptable fit using RMSEA as a measurement of fit, while a value greater than 0.90 was recommended to meet the GFI requirements for a good fitting model (Hooper, Coughlan, & Mullen, 2008). Such information was discussed further in Chapter 4.

A Cronbach's alpha value was determined for each scale (e.g., normative beliefs of family expectations). Cronbach's alpha measured scale reliability and internal consistency of the variables as a group (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011). There was not a set value to determine if the scales were reliable, but scholars tend to agree that if the Cronbach's alpha is greater than .70, then the scores from the scales may be considered reliable, especially for the group-based research (Nunnally, 1978; Tavakol & Dennick, 2011). In addition, "...individual item reliability is assessed by examining the loadings (or simple correlations) of the measures with their respective construct" (Hulland, 1999, p. 198). Regarding loadings, Hulland (1999) explained a threshold of .50 and above was preferred with 0.70 and above being desired; thus, in a complex model, retaining items with factor loadings at .50 and above was acceptable.

Regarding, validity, it was determined through the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value. AVE is "...the average variance shared between a construct and its measures" (Hulland, 1999, p. 200). There were two forms of validity: convergent and discriminant. Convergent validity is when two measures that do in fact measure the same

construct, which indicates a relationship among the two. Convergent validity was met if the AVE value was .50 or greater (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Discriminant validity is determined from the AVE, as the AVE must be greater than the shared variance for each of the latent variables (Chin, 1998). Discriminant validity represented the differing measures of variables in the same model. Evidence obtained for estimates of score reliability and validity was presented in Chapter 4.

### **Conclusion**

By using a quantitative approach, then relationship and strength were able to be obtained of the variables in each of the research questions. As previously mentioned, this research used a post-positive epistemology. The goals of the study were to gain a better understanding of predicting intent to study abroad of graduate students in a HESA program in the southeastern United States. Data were collected through a survey, and any individual that met the criteria of being a graduate student in a HESA program at a selected southeastern United States institution was encouraged to participate in the study. The survey data were analyzed through inferential statistical methods with mention of the descriptive statistics. The inferential statistical method used was the SEM technique.

## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS OF THE STUDY

Survey data were gathered from 184 participants and 171 responses were deemed usable based on the participant fully completing the survey. A SEM was developed to analyze the data using both CFA and linear regression. The software used to develop the SEM and analyze the data was AMOS 25, which is an add-on to IBM SPSS (Wu, Tsai, Cheng, Kuo, & Lu, 2014). AMOS provided a user friendly interface for model development; however, there was a need to verify results in both the SPSS and Minitab statistical packages. AMOS was used to evaluate a SEM that included both a measurement model and structural model. The measurement model utilized CFA to evaluate the observed variables (31 survey questions) that were associated with the seven latent variables. The structural model utilized regression techniques to develop models based on established relationships (paths) between the latent variables as detailed in the theoretical framework (Figure 3).

#### **Descriptive Statistics**

This section focused specifically on the demographic information that was collected in the survey. The demographic information collected from the survey focused on the following: previous participation in a study abroad program, currently or previously studied a foreign language, degree seeking, year in program, program type,

identification of self, description of self, age, marital status, children in family, and employment status

From the collected demographic information, it was determined that 61% of the participants had never studied abroad, with 30% having studied abroad as an undergraduate student and only 9% having studied abroad in graduate school. With regards to studying a foreign language, the majority (87%) did so in elementary and/or high school with 63% continuing in undergraduate studies. Only 3% studied a foreign language in graduate school, while 6% had never studied a foreign language. Master's students accounted for 69% of the participants, while the remaining 31% were doctoral students. Of the participants 41% were first year graduate students in their programs, and 41% were second year graduate students in their programs. Third year graduate students in a HESA program represented 11%, while fourth year (3%), fifth year (2%), and sixth year (1%) students totaled 6% of the participants. Only 1% of the participants did not identify as a first through sixth year student. Regarding program type, 77% were enrolled in campus-based programs, while 12% were enrolled in online programs and 11% were enrolled in hybrid programs.

With regards to gender self-identification, females represented 76% of the participants while males were 22%. One individual (1%) identified as gender nonconforming. In addition, one individual (1%) preferred not to answer the question. Several racial self-descriptions were represented in the study where 80% identified as White, 13% identified as Black or African American, 5% identified as Asian, 6% identified as other, and 1% preferred not to answer. With regards to the other category, those individuals could have identified themselves in several ways, and it was highly

likely that a majority of the individuals that marked “other,” identified as Latino/a/x, since that response option was not available on the survey.

The survey provided age ranges including 18-24 (40%), 25-34 (43%), 35-44 (12%), 45-54 (4%) and over 54 (1%). With regards to marital status, 65% were unmarried, 28% were married, and 2% were divorced. Of the total sample, 4% selected other regarding marital status, and 1% preferred not to answer. Another family demographic collected inquired about children, and 84% had no children while 16% had children. The employment status of the participants was the final demographic question asked, and 44% were employed full-time, while 54% were employed part-time with the remaining 2% identified as unemployed.

Table 3

*Demographic Characteristics*

Description	N	%
Previous Participation in Study Abroad Program		
Yes, as an undergraduate student	51	30
Yes, as a graduate student	15	9
No	105	61
Studied Foreign Language		
Yes, in elementary and/or high school	148	87
Yes, in college	108	63
Yes, in graduate school	5	3
No	11	6
Degree Seeking		
Master of Science	41	24
Master of Arts	18	11
Master of Education	58	34
Doctor of Philosophy	35	20
Doctor of Education	19	11
Year in Program		
First	70	41
Second	71	41
Third	18	11
Fourth	6	3
Fifth	4	2
Sixth	1	1
Other	1	1
Academic Program		
Campus-based	132	77
Online	20	12
Hybrid	19	11
Identify Self		
Male	39	22
Female	130	76
Gender Nonconforming	1	1
Prefer Not to Answer	1	1
Describe Self		
Asian	9	5
Black or African American	22	13
White	137	80
Other	11	6
Prefer Not to Answer	1	1

Table 3 (continued)

Description	<i>N</i>	%
Age		
18-24	69	40
25-34	73	43
35-44	21	12
45-54	7	4
Above 54	1	1
Marital Status		
Married	48	28
Divorced	4	2
Unmarried	110	65
Other	7	4
Prefer Not to Answer	2	1
Children		
Yes	28	16
No	143	84
Employment Status		
Full-time Employment	75	44
Part-time Employment	92	54
Unemployed	4	2

*Note.* *N* = 171; % rounded to the nearest whole number.

### Measurement Model

The original dataset from 171 participants was input into AMOS such that CFA was applied to the 31 observed variables (survey questions) based on their association with the seven latent variables. The measurement model (Figure 4) was evaluated three times (run one, run two, run three) with run one utilizing the original dataset. AMOS provided standardized results which were reported in this study.

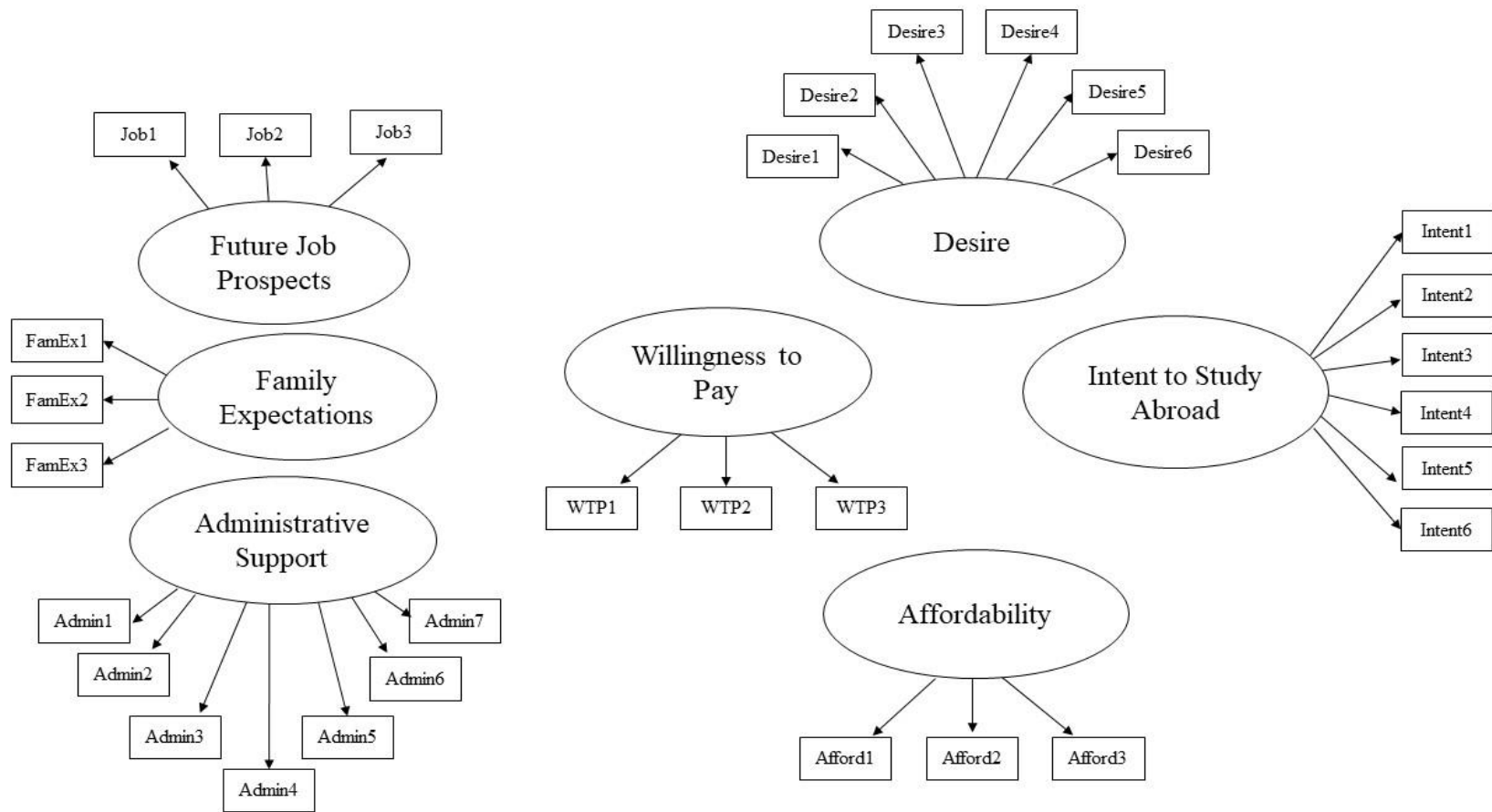


Figure 4. Measurement model. The larger ovals represented the seven latent variables, and the smaller ovals represented the 31 observed variables.



## Run One

Initially, I evaluated the loadings calculated by AMOS for each of the observed variables associated with the latent variables. CFA (Strauss et al., 2000) was simply a data reduction technique whereas multiple vectors (e.g., the survey questions or observed variables) associated with each latent variable (e.g., future job prospects, family expectations, administrative support, willingness to pay, desire, affordability, and intent to study abroad) were reduced to one representative vector for each latent variable. In evaluating the loadings of each observed variable, a threshold of .50 and above was preferred with 0.70 and above being desired (Hulland, 1997). Meeting this threshold indicated that the observed variables (e.g., survey questions) associated with the latent variable were appropriate.

Run one resulted in loading values for each observed variable (Figure 5). The vast majority (27 of 31) of observed variable loadings achieved the threshold value of .50. This reflected that the survey questions were generally appropriate. However, there were two latent variables (administrative support and affordability) where observed variables did not achieve the preferred 0.50 threshold (Figure 5).

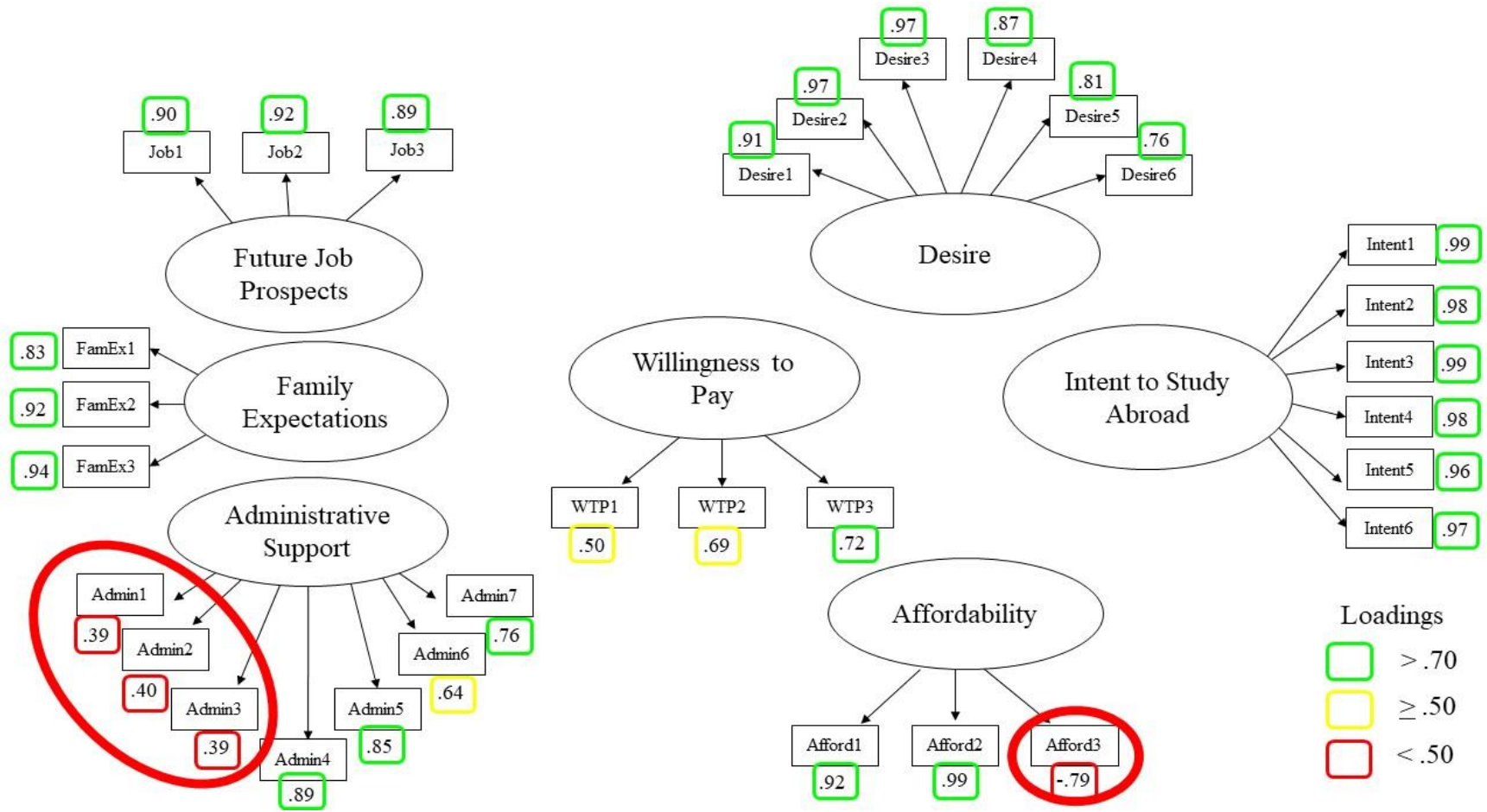


Figure 5. Factor loadings. Loadings circled in red did not achieve the preferred minimum loading value of .50.

## Run Two

Focusing on administrative support, there were seven observed variables (survey questions) associated with this latent variable. The results (loadings) of the first three observed variables (admin1, admin2, admin3) did not achieve the preferred .50 threshold while the remaining four observed variables (admin4, admin5, admin6, admin7) met the threshold. With regards to the seven observed variables (questions), the first three observed variables provided “don’t know” as a response option, while the last four observed variables (questions) did not provide “don’t know” as a response option. In order to improve the factor loadings for the first three observed variables, the Expectation-Maximization (EM) imputation statistical technique was applied (Sajobi et al., 2014) to admin1, admin2, and admin3 individually. The “don’t know” responses were simply changed to “missing a response” as in no response was provided. EM imputation then replaced the missing responses based on predicting the maximum likelihood estimates from all available data (Sajobi et al., 2014). EM imputation was thus advantageous in that it allowed for the inclusion of the maximum number of observations. There was considerable improvement of the factor loadings for admin1 (.75), admin2 (.72), and admin3 (.77) after applying EM imputation (Figure 6).

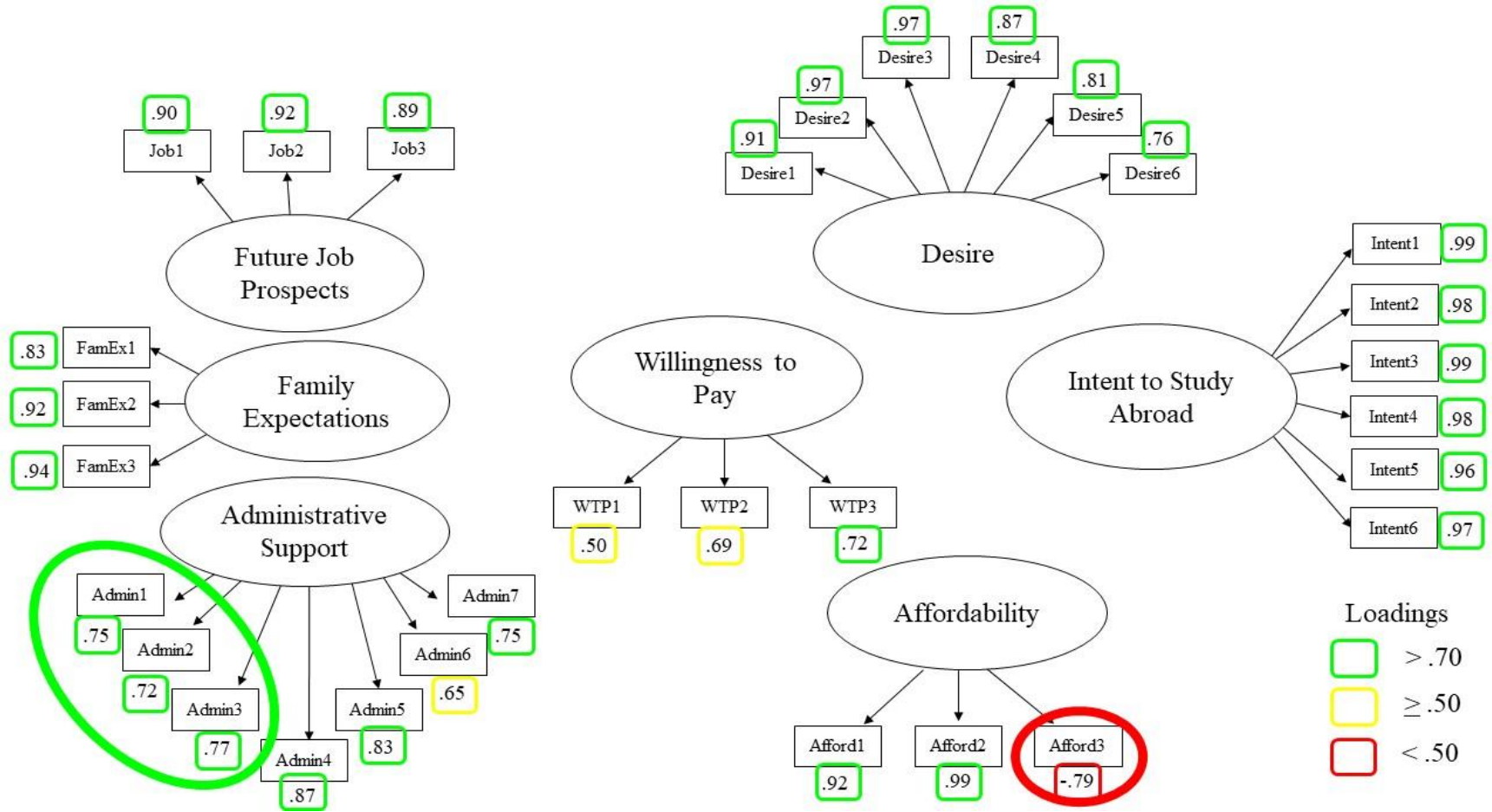


Figure 6. New loading values for admin1, admin2, and admin3. Loadings for admin1, admin2, and admin3 now achieved the preferred (.50) threshold by performing EM imputation.

### Run Three

The final measurement model (run three) focused on affordability and more specifically on observed variable (question) afford3. The current loading for afford3 was  $-.79$ . Thus, while the magnitude exceeded the preferred threshold ( $.50$ ), the sign was negative which indicated that the data for this observed variable must be reversed. The afford3 question read, “Study abroad programs are too expensive for me.” Afford3 was worded in a negative manner while afford1 and afford2 were worded in a positive manner. When the data for afford3 was reversed, such that all “7” responses were recoded as “1”(s) and so on, the loading of afford3 ( $.79$ ) improved and now met the preferred threshold ( $.50$ ) (Figure 7). The interpretation of responses was not changed when the data was reversed in the manner list above. Thus, the loading simply changed from a negative value to a positive value.

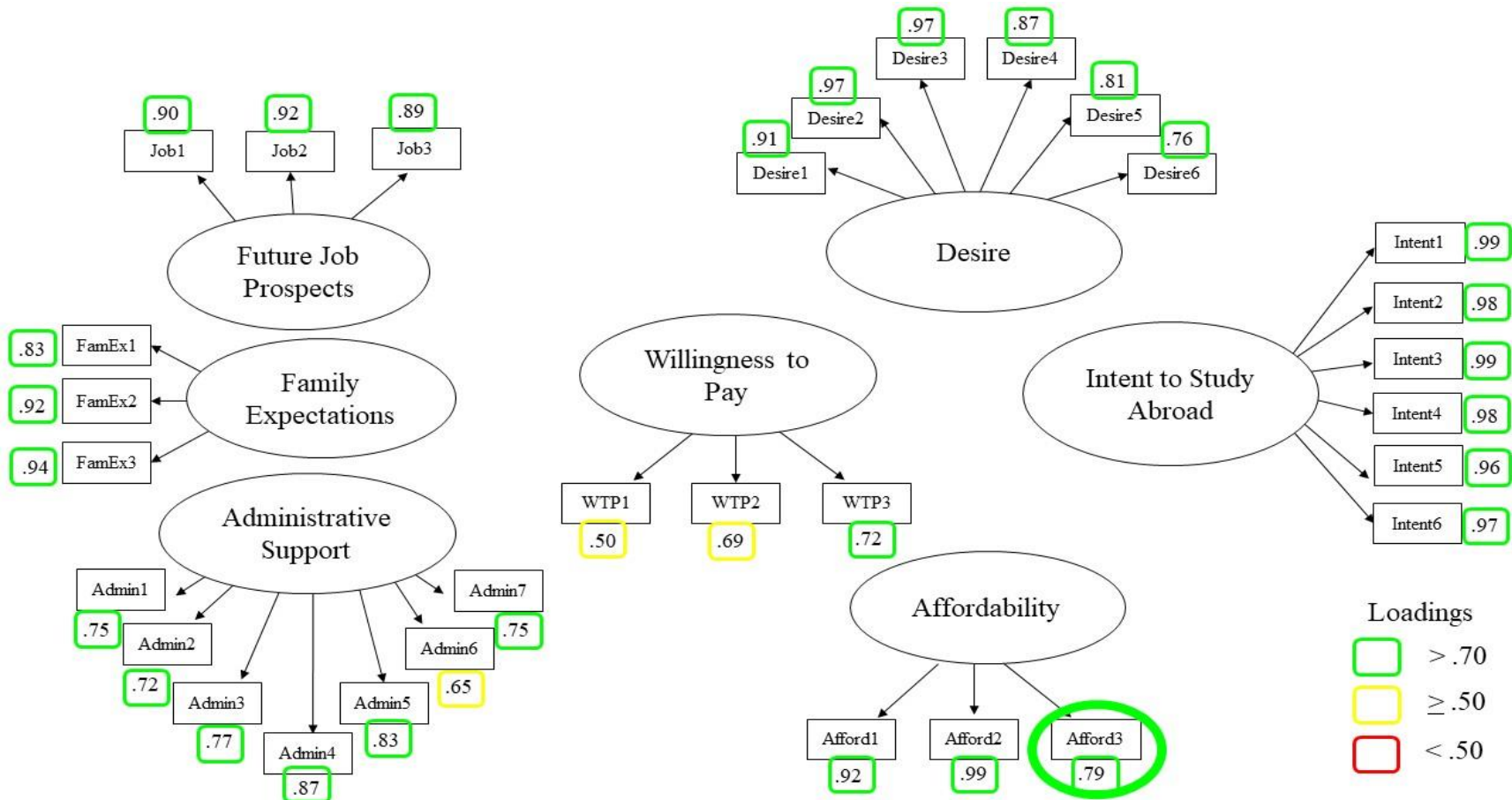


Figure 7. New loading value for afford3. The loading for afford3 improved and changed from -.79 to .79, since the data was reversed for the observed variable of afford3. Afford3 now achieved the desired threshold (.50).

### Measurement Model Fit

CFA indicated whether the observed variables (questions) supported the associated latent variable. Each of the observed variables met the preferred loading threshold of .50 (Table 4) after I made the statistical adjustments.

Reliability was achieved for all latent variables except willingness to pay. According to Nunnally (1978) and Tavakol and Dennick (2011), and as mentioned in Chapter 3, scale reliability was met for all latent variables except willingness to pay based on the Cronbach's alpha achieving a threshold value of .70 (Table 4).

The AVE was above .50, considered a threshold value, (Fornell & Larcker, 1981), for all latent variables except willingness to pay, which had an AVE of .40 (Table 4). As mentioned in Chapter 3, all latent variables except willingness to pay met the threshold for convergent validity based on AVE values above .50. In addition, discriminant validity was met for all latent variables except for willingness to pay and desire. Since the AVE for willingness to pay and desire were not greater than the shared variance for each latent variable (Chin, 1998), discriminant validity was not met for willingness to pay and desire (Table 4).

Table 4

*Loadings, Validity, and Reliability Values*

Latent Variable	Item	Loading	Cronbach's alpha	Average Variance Extracted	Shared Variance
Intent to Study Abroad	Intent1	.99	.99	.95	.34
	Intent2	.98			
	Intent3	.99			
	Intent4	.98			
	Intent5	.96			
	Intent6	.97			
Willingness to Pay	WTP1	.50	.66	.40	.82
	WTP2	.69			
	WTP3	.72			
Affordability	Afford1	.92	.93	.82	.10
	Afford2	.99			
	Afford3*	.79			
Desire	Desire1	.91	.96	.79	.82
	Desire2	.97			
	Desire3	.97			
	Desire4	.87			
	Desire5	.81			
	Desire6	.86			



Table 4 (continued)

Latent Variables	Item	Loading	Cronbach's alpha	Average Variance Extracted	Shared Variance
Job Prospects	Job1	.90	.93	.81	.52
	Job2	.92			
	Job3	.89			
Family Expectations	FamEx1	.83	.92	.81	.21
	FamEx2	.92			
	FamEx3	.94			
Administrative Support	Admin1	.75	.91	.59	.03
	Admin2	.72			
	Admin3	.77			
	Admin4	.87			
	Admin5	.83			
	Admin6	.65			
	Admin7	.75			

*Note.* The information in the table noted the loadings, Cronbach's alpha, Average Variance Extracted (AVE), and shared variance. The \* indicated that afford3 was reverse scored.

## Structural Model

The structural model developed was based on the relationships between the latent variables as provided in the theoretical framework (Figure 3). SEM, similar to path analysis, developed a regression model (or models) based on the prescribed paths of the latent variables. The independent and dependent variables in the regression model were developed in the measurement model. These single vectors represented each latent variable as a result of CFA on the observed variables (questions) associated with each latent variable, thus reducing multiple vectors to one representative vector. Two regression models were developed based on the theoretical framework of this study (Figure 8). Model one evaluated future job prospects, family expectations, and administrative support as independent variables with willingness to pay as the dependent variable while model two evaluated willingness to pay, desire, and affordability as independent variables with intent to study abroad as the dependent variable (Figure 8). The strength of the relationships of the independent variables to the dependent variable in each model was indicated by the path coefficients (Figure 9).

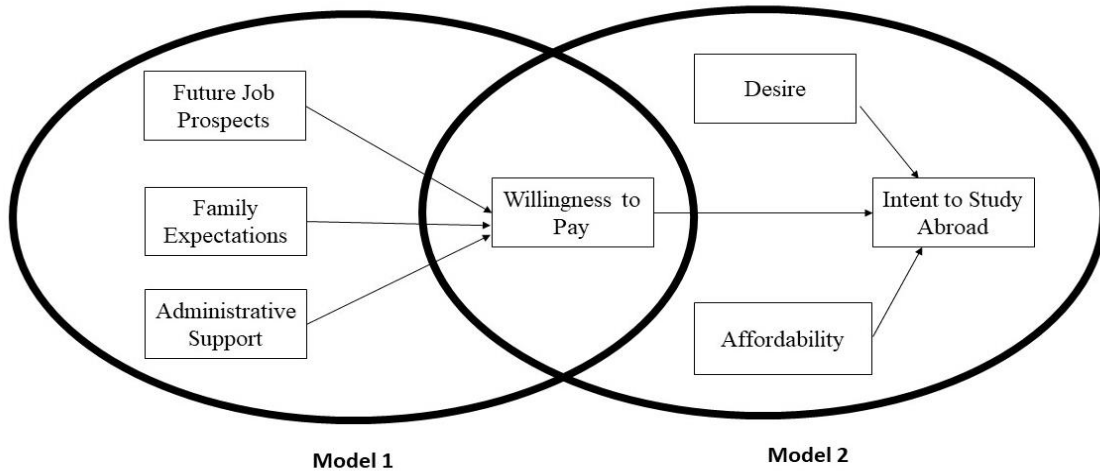


Figure 8. Two models. This figure provided a display of the two models.

### Model One

Model One was represented by three independent variables (future job prospects, family expectations, and administrative support) and one dependent variable (willingness to pay) (Figure 8). Model one used future job prospects, family expectations, and administrative support to generate willingness to pay, which willingness to pay was then used in model two to predict intent to study abroad of graduate students. Regression analysis was performed and the results produced three path coefficients to show the statistical relationships of: future job prospects to willingness to pay (-.70), family expectations to willingness to pay (-.08), and administrative support to willingness to pay (-.13). Future job prospects had the strongest statistical relationship with willingness to pay with a path coefficient of -.70. The negative path coefficient value for future job prospects affirmed that the relationship with willingness to pay was positive due to the fact that the observed variables (survey questions) for future job prospects were worded in a positive manner while the observed variables (survey questions) for willingness to pay were worded in a negative manner. Thus, a negative path coefficient in this case represented a positive

relationship of future job prospects and willingness to pay. This means that when the positive beliefs of future job prospects increases, the perceived value of study abroad (willingness to pay) increases. Thus, future job prospects, family expectations, and administrative support generated willingness to pay, and in the next section, model two, the relationship of willingness to pay and intent to study abroad were discussed.

After evaluating the path coefficients, the significance of the path coefficients and how significantly different the path coefficients were from zero was examined. The p-values of the path coefficients were used to determine the significance of the path coefficients. The path coefficient for future job prospects was statistically significant ( $p < .001$ ), while the path coefficients for family expectations and administrative support were not statistically significant with  $p = .279$  and  $p = .098$ , respectively. Thus, future job prospects was the only statistically significant contributing independent variable in the regression model to willingness to pay. The regression model produced an  $R^2$  value of .51 meaning the model explained 51% of the variance (Figure 9).

Based off the results, I found that research hypothesis 2 was supported while research hypotheses 3 and 4 were not supported. H2 stated that: “HESA graduate students’ behavioral beliefs of future job prospects related to study abroad programs will be positively related to their willingness to pay.” While the path coefficient was  $-.70$  and statistically significant ( $p < .001$ ), I found that the research supported this hypothesis at the .001 significance level, which was the threshold for this study (Greenland et al., 2016). H3 stated that: “HESA graduate students’ normative beliefs of family expectations of study abroad programs will be positively related to willingness to pay.” I found that the research did not support this hypothesis in that the path coefficient of  $-.08$  was not statistically significant ( $p = .279$ ) at the .001 threshold. Finally, H4

stated that: “Graduate students’ control beliefs of administrative support of study abroad programs will be positively related to their willingness to pay.” I found that the research did not support this hypothesis in that the path coefficient of -.13 was not statistically significant ( $p = .098$ ) at the .001 threshold (Table 5). In conclusion, for graduate students, future job prospects contributed to willingness to pay, while family expectations and administrative support did not, meaning that for HESA graduate students, the positive beliefs of future job prospects mean there is an increase in the perceived value of study abroad or willingness to pay.

## **Model Two**

Model two was represented by three independent variables (desire, willingness to pay, and affordability) and one dependent variable (intent to study abroad; Figure 8). Note, model two differed from model one in that the independent variable representing willingness to pay was generated from the regression model developed in model one. Desire, willingness to pay, and affordability were used to predict intent to study abroad of graduate students. Regression analysis was performed and the results produced three path coefficients to show the statistical relationships of: desire to intent to study abroad (.62), willingness to pay to intent to study abroad (.12), and affordability to intent to study abroad (.24). Desire clearly displayed the strongest statistical relationship with intent to study abroad with a path coefficient of .62.

After evaluating the path coefficients, the significance of the path coefficients and how significantly different the path coefficients were from zero was examined. The path coefficients for desire and affordability were statistically significant ( $p < .001$ ), while the path coefficient for willingness to pay was not statistically significant ( $p = .075$ ). Thus, desire and affordability were the statistically significant contributing independent variables in the regression model to intent to study abroad.

Based off the results, I found research hypotheses 5 and 6 were supported while research hypothesis 1 was not supported. H5 stated that: “HESA graduate students’ desire to participate in study abroad programs will be positively related to their intent to study abroad.” I found the research strongly supported this hypothesis in that the path coefficient (.62) was statistically significant ( $p < .001$ ) at the .001 significance level. H6 stated that: “HESA graduate students’ perceptions of affordability of study abroad programs will be positively related to their intent to study abroad.” I found the research supported this hypothesis in that the path coefficient was .24 and was statistically significant ( $p < .001$ ). H1 stated that: “HESA graduate students’ willingness to pay for study abroad programs will be positively related to their intent to study abroad.” I found the research did not support this hypothesis in that the path coefficient of .12 was not statistically significant ( $p = .075$ ) at the .001 threshold (Table 5). In conclusion, the relationship of desire with intent to study abroad was approximately two and half times greater than that of affordability with intent to study abroad. The findings indicated that desire followed by affordability were the two variables of importance of intent to study abroad of HESA graduate students.

Table 5

*Hypotheses and Findings*

Hypothesis	Hypothesis Statement	Findings Regarding Hypothesis
H1	HESA graduate students' willingness to pay for study abroad programs will be positively related to their intent to study abroad.	This hypothesis was not supported in that the path coefficient (.12) was not statistically significant ( $p = .075$ ).
H2	HESA graduate students' behavioral beliefs of future job prospects will be positively related to their intent to study abroad.	This hypothesis was supported in that the path coefficient (-.70) was statistically significant ( $p < .001$ ).
H3	HESA graduate students' normative beliefs of family expectations of study abroad programs will be positively related to their willingness to pay.	This hypothesis was not supported in that the path coefficient (-.08) was not statistically significant ( $p = .279$ ).
H4	HESA graduate students' control beliefs of administrative support of study abroad programs will be positively related to their willingness to pay.	This hypothesis was not supported in that the path coefficient (-.13) was not statistically significant ( $p = .098$ ).
H5	HESA graduate students' desire to participate in study abroad programs will be positively related to their intent to study abroad.	This hypothesis was supported in that the path coefficient (.62) was statistically significant ( $p < .001$ ).
H6	HESA graduate students' perceptions of affordability of study abroad will be positively related to their intent to study abroad.	This hypothesis was supported in that the path coefficient (.24) was statistically significant ( $p < .001$ ).

*Note.* H1, H2, H3, H4, H5, and H6 represented hypotheses 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6.

The regression model produced an  $R^2$  value of .46 meaning the model explained 46% of the variance (Figure 9). Model fit was evaluated by examining GFI and RMSEA. GFI was .69 while RMSEA was .105. A value greater than .90 was desired for GFI, and a value less than .10 was desired for RMSEA (Hooper, Coughlan, & Mullen, 2008; MacCallum et al., 1996). Given the complexity of this model, it was not surprising the structural model did not meet these thresholds. Thus, since model-fit thresholds were not met, it is apparent that as presented in this study, the model is not as useful as if perhaps modified.

Modifications to the model were considered, but I was unable to identify a modification that (a) kept within the theoretical model framework; and (b) achieved a successful model-data fit, based on the indicators that I chose to consider. An example of a modification that was considered was tweaking willingness to pay. It was problematic in my survey (lowest loadings). It appeared the observed variables needed to be reworked, as this could be a factor in why willingness to pay did not significantly contribute to intent to study abroad. Reworking willingness to pay could be the best first step to improve model fit. When tweaking willingness to pay by only using two of the three observed variables, model variance improved but nothing meaningful in GFI and RMSEA. Thus, conducting such a modification disrupted the theoretical framework and did not achieve a successfully fit model.



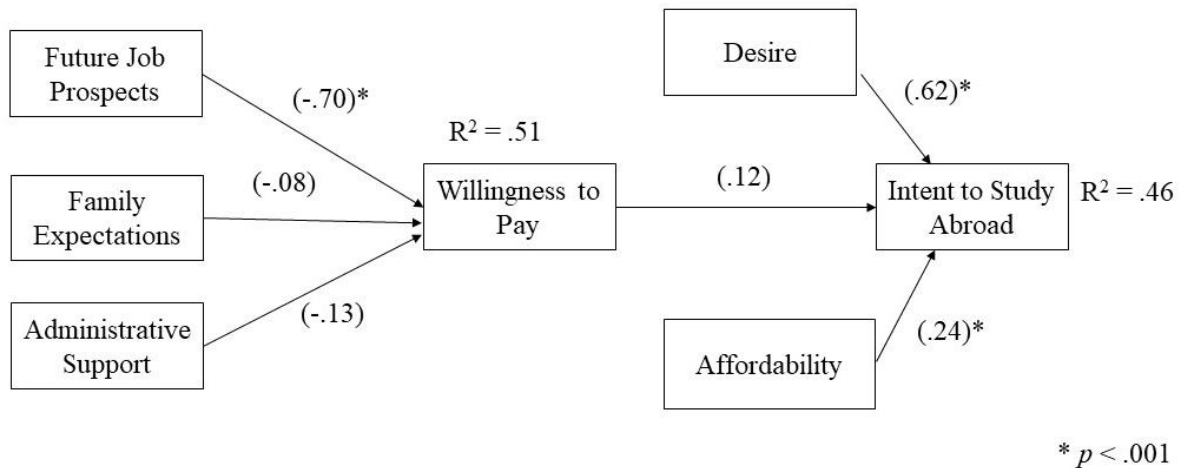


Figure 9. Structural equation model. Path coefficients (numbers in parentheses) with a \* indicated p-values that were statistically significant ( $p < .001$ ) with  $R^2$  as the variance associated with model one or model two.

### Exploratory Analysis

After getting the results stated above, I conducted an exploratory analysis. This analysis was conducted to learn further about select demographic characteristics (of those collected in this study) that had the greatest desire regarding intent to study abroad since for intent to study abroad, desire had the strongest relationship. Five demographic characteristics (identification of self, children, study abroad experience, foreign language, and degree) from this study were evaluated to learn how each participant responded to the six questions of desire (desire1, desire2, desire3, desire4, desire5, desire6) in this study. Identification of self included those that responded as male or female while children included those that had children and those that did not have children. Study abroad experience included those that had previously studied abroad and those that had not previously studied abroad while foreign language included those that had studied a foreign language and those that had not studied a foreign language. Finally, degree

included those that were seeking a master degree and those that were seeking a doctoral degree. The Wilcoxon Rank-Sum Test compares the equality of two vectors to conclude if the vectors were statistically significantly different. The Wilcoxon Rank-Sum Test does not require the data to be normally distributed (Neuhauser, 2015; Rosner, Glynn, Lee, 2003).

First, the data were segregated by male (1) and female (2), children (1) and no children (2), study abroad experience (1) and no study abroad experience (2), foreign language (1) and no foreign language (2), and master degree (1) and doctoral degree (2), whereas a simple binary (1 or 2) code was used as the identifier. For each of the five demographic characteristics, the data were segregated (1 or 2) along with the responses to the corresponding questions (desire1, desire2, desire3, desire4, desire5, desire6). Next, for each demographic characteristic, significance testing was performed comparing the desire1 vector for the (1) identifier to the desire1 vector for the (2) identifier. This process was repeated for desire2, desire3, desire4, desire5, and desire6.

Using a significance level of .05, the results indicated that for all six desire questions for males and females, there was no statistically significant difference. For those that had children and those that did not have children, the results indicated that for desire1, desire3, desire4, desire5, and desire6 there was a statistically significant difference. For those that had prior study abroad experience and those that did not have prior study abroad experience, the results indicated that for desire1, desire2, desire3, desire5, and desire6 there was a statistically significant difference. For those that had studied a foreign language and those that had not studied a foreign language, the results indicated that for desire5 there was a statistically significant difference. Finally, for those

seeking a master degree and those seeking a doctoral degree the results indicated that for desire6 there was a statistically significant difference.

Thus, it was concluded that there was a consistent, statistically significant difference in responses to desire regarding intent to study abroad for those that had children and those that did not have children as well as for those that had prior study abroad experience and those that did not have prior study abroad experience. A comparison (1 versus 2) of the desire1, desire2, desire3, desire4, desire5, desire6 vector means (averages) revealed higher average responses for those that did not have children compared to those that did have children. Thus, desire regarding intent to study abroad was higher for those that did not have children. A comparison (1 versus 2) of the desire1, desire2, desire3, desire4, desire5, desire6 vector means (averages) revealed higher average responses for those that had previously studied abroad compared to those whom had not previously studied abroad. Thus, desire regarding intent to study abroad was higher for those whom had previously studied abroad. So, the findings from this exploratory analysis revealed that HESA graduate students that previously studied abroad and those with no children had the highest desire regarding intent to study abroad.

Overall, the results and findings from this study were used to provide further details in Chapter 5 regarding HESA graduate students and intent to study abroad.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION AND RESULTS

This study used select observed variables (survey questions) and paths among latent variables to determine intent to study abroad of HESA graduate students at institutions in the southeastern United States. Coupled with the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991) as the framework, the cognitive and economic beliefs and intentions were influenced by select variables presented in the model developed for this study. The analysis in Chapter 4 provided results that were unique and differed from findings in Schnusenberg et al. (2012) related to undergraduate students in the educational arena of study abroad. These findings will help provide a benefit to students, specifically HESA graduate students, who intend to study abroad. This includes the potential for university study abroad programs to expand opportunities to HESA graduate students. The methodology and framework used in this study could be applied to both undergraduate and graduate students, additional disciplines other than HESA, and to other regions in the United States; however, modifications to the model could provide additional value to future research regarding intent to study abroad.

#### **Limitations**

To begin discussing how this study contributes to research and practice related to study abroad and HESA programs, it is necessary to discuss the limitations of this study. A primary limitation was that the results were completely student driven as the students'

self-reported as they completed the survey. With self-reporting, there was a chance that the participants could randomly mark answers or even provide untrue answers to the questions. There was a chance that some findings could be misleading or misrepresented by having students self-report data (Hsu, 2014). This limitation led to another limitation in that the interpretation of the questions and statements differed for each participant, which may have caused the answers selected to vary (Mansholt, Vining, Long, & Goertz, 2015). In conclusion, participants could mark answers based on how they preferred to feel rather than how they actually did feel about a certain statement or question (Palin, Goldner, Koehoorn, & Hertzman, 2011).

A prevailing limitation in this study was the omission of Latino/a/x as an option on the survey. Although there were few, only 11 “other” responses and 1 “prefer not to answer” response on the survey regarding the question of how the participants described themselves, it is uncertain of the number of participants in the study that described themselves as Latino/a/x as well as ambiguous as to how those twelve participants described themselves. Although this study did not focus on reporting the demographics of intent to study abroad of each of the different ways in which the participants described themselves, it is important to note this limitation to ensure Latino/a/x is captured in future research.

The setting where the participants completed the survey could positively or negatively affect the participants’ responses and thus could limit the study. Some settings could have been quiet (e.g., survey was taken on a computer from home) as opposed to other settings that had more distractions affecting concentration (e.g., survey was taken in a classroom space). Finally, “survey fatigue” could limit the study as the survey consisted

of 46 questions which could have been considered a time-demanding survey for some participants. SurveyMonkey indicated that the average time spent on the survey was four minutes and 34 seconds. As indicated at the beginning of the survey, it was noted that the survey would take about 5-10 minutes to complete; however, 25 participants spent excessive time completing the survey.

Although this study was focused on the findings of intent to study abroad and not the actual participation of study abroad, the intent to study abroad could be influenced by world events that are currently and continuously occurring in the world, which could limit the study and impact the results. For example, with terrorism threats and acts occurring abroad, it was important to note that intent to study abroad of participants may be affected due to world events that study abroad participants cannot control when studying abroad. In conclusion, even with a significant correlation, found by Armitage and Conner (2001), among behavior and intent, it would not be known if those that had an intent to study abroad actually do participate in a study abroad opportunity in the future.

## **Discussion**

This study contributes to study abroad literature in that previous studies had only minimally discussed graduate students. In comparing this study to a previous study such as Schnusenberg et al. (2012) focusing on undergraduates and intent to study abroad, the findings here provided several new contributions which provide greater insight on graduate students specifically, and study abroad generally. Through this study, I determined that graduate students' intent to study abroad, influenced by their desire, differed from Schnusenberg et al.'s (2012) findings on undergraduate students' intent

who were primarily influenced by affordability. This is an important discovery in that program cost (affordability), while a statistically significant factor in graduate students' intent to study abroad, lagged well behind desire. Past research efforts identified affordability as the leading factor in undergraduate students' intent to study abroad (Schnusenberg et al., 2012).

The model used in this study explained 46% of the variance ( $R^2 = .46$ ). Armitage and Conner (2001) provided a comprehensive evaluation of 185 studies that applied the Theory of Planned Behavior. When evaluating intention, an average of 37% of variance was explained. Schnusenberg et al. (2012) explained 59% of variance ( $R^2 = .59$ ) for intent to study abroad. Thus, both this study and Schnusenberg et al. (2012) exceeded the average variance (37%) for intention from 185 studies, displaying that both models provided skillful fit. This is significant because model fit regarding variance was achieved, and that is important because with a skillful fit, variance analysis could be used to inform institutions of variables or factors that impact study abroad intent. In this study, both desire and affordability had a positive impact on study abroad intent of graduate students.

In addition, a comparison of the research model in this study with Schnusenberg et al. (2012) regarding the paths found to be statistically different from zero or statistically significant (indicating a p-value less than .001) is equally important. Through the research model in the study, I found that desire and affordability were the statistically significant contributing independent variables in the regression model to intent to study abroad. Schnusenberg et al. (2012) found that desire, affordability, and willingness to pay were all statistically significant to intent to study abroad.

The different statistically significant findings of this research study focused on graduate students and Schnusenberg et al.'s (2012) study focused on undergraduate students suggested that the differences found are possibly a function of the level of the student. Undergraduate students and graduate students are not only different in being classified as either an undergraduate student or a graduate student, but demographics differ among the two groups. Graduate students are older than the average undergraduate student, and according to the United States Census Bureau, at least 75% of graduate students have a full-time job with 50% classified as married (Caulfield, 2010). In my study, 44% had full-time jobs, 54% had part-time jobs, and 28% were married.

Affordability was statistically significant among graduate students and their intent to study abroad, although not as great as a contributor (with a path coefficient of .24) as it was for undergraduate students (with a path coefficient of .70) in Schnusenberg et al. (2012). The strength of affordability related to intent to study abroad of graduate students suggested again that finances were not the top concern for graduate students and could be due to having the funds available because of being employed full-time or part-time, which made up 98% of the graduate students that responded to the survey in this study. Only 2% of the graduate student participants were unemployed.

The level of the student possibly explains the difference in the findings of the variables that were statistically different from zero for graduate students in this study. Overall, time constraints, such as being employed or being married, of graduate students could explain the reason desire and affordability were statistically significant from zero in this study while willingness to pay of graduate students was not. A detailed discussion of willingness to pay related to undergraduate students from Schnusenberg et al. (2012) and



graduate students in this study is noted later in this chapter in the section, Modifications to Survey and Model.

To emphasize the significance of this study, as stated, this research study was the first extensive study focused on solely graduate students' perceptions of study abroad in the field of HESA in the southeastern United States. This is important, as this study could potentially be a foundation for future studies involving graduate students and comparisons of what I found on graduate students and what previous literature (Schnusenberg et al., 2012) found on undergraduate students. The modeling applied in this study was a complicated statistical process involving multivariate statistics (CFA), regression models, and various complex statistics to evaluate model fit. The complex statistical approaches were chosen for this study because they were previously used in a study to determine undergraduate intent to study abroad (Schnusenberg et al., 2012); thus, the statistical approaches were appropriate for this study focused on graduate students and intent to study abroad. The sample size (171) in this study was more than adequate based on suggested sample sizes for SEMs in the literature. However, given the modeling and statistical complexity in this study, a larger sample size could improve model fit. Since sample size affects model fit statistics (MacCallum, Widaman, Zhang, & Hong, 1999), a larger sample size could lead the research as being better received by scholars in the academic community based upon the mentioned literature focused on sample size.

### **Implications for Policy and Practice**

International programs and study abroad offices at higher education institutions would benefit greatly from this research study. Determined from exploring institutions' study abroad websites and the prior literature, study abroad opportunities at universities

seem mostly limited to undergraduate students (Hulstrand, 2015). Based on previous research (Schnusenberg et al., 2012), the decision or intent to study abroad was driven by finances (affordability) for undergraduate students. In this study, I found that graduate students viewed study abroad or intent to study abroad differently than undergraduate students in that the decision or intent to study abroad was driven greatest by desire for graduate students.

Study abroad programs at higher education institutions should view these results as a great opportunity to increase study abroad participation and enrollment by providing policies for graduate students to earn credits and study abroad. Many international institutions are now providing graduate courses in English (Bernini, 2015) which could prepare and make their students competitive to attend United States institutions. Thus, by providing graduate courses in English, opportunities to study abroad are already in place to allow United States students to integrate at international universities and gain both a great academic and cultural experience. Cai et al. (2015) informed about the decision-making process of study abroad which included both the pre-evaluation phase and the actual decision-making phase. As Cai et al. (2015) mentioned, the pre-evaluation phase included individuals conducting research on the study abroad programs available, and the decision-making phase for individuals focused on the motivators and barriers of study abroad. Thus, perhaps a motivator of study abroad for United States graduate students could be the fact that many international institutions do provide courses in English, whereas the absence of English options at some international institutions could be a barrier of study abroad for graduate students. Additionally, homegrown United States

faculty led programs could be developed to offer study abroad opportunities to graduate students.

Additionally, the findings from this study could improve national policy efforts. The United States and international institutions could develop Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) to allow graduate students in the United States to study abroad at international institutions and to allow graduate students at international institutions to study abroad at institutions in the United States. The 2005 Commission on the Abraham Lincoln Study Abroad Fellowship Program policy (see Chapter 1) focused exclusively on undergraduate students (Commission on the Abraham Lincoln Study Abroad Fellowship Program, 2005). In addition, another policy that focused on study abroad (see Chapter 1) was the United States Senator Paul Simon Study Abroad Foundation Act of 2007. That policy too focused exclusively on undergraduate students with an aim to make study abroad a standard practice for undergraduate students (Nyaupane, Paris, & Teye, 2011). Thus, with the increase in research and focus on graduate students in study abroad, policies could be created and tailored to assist graduate students who desire to study abroad, since increased knowledge is now known about how to best assist graduate students' needs related to intent to study abroad. In 2010, Graduate Student Central, a policy project begun by NAFSA to assist graduate students with advancing their studies and with professional development related to international education (NAFSA, 2018b), could be expanded to include desirable components related to the findings in this study focused upon graduate student study abroad intent. In conclusion, with the recent focus on internationalizing disciplines in higher education, efforts could be put forth to make

study abroad a standard practice for graduate students, similar to the Senator Simon Study Abroad Foundation Act.

Professional preparation in HESA programs is contingent upon professional development and learning opportunities available to graduate students. ACE (2016) emphasized that in the profession, student affairs administrators are expected to advance global competencies. Study abroad is a global learning opportunity for HESA graduate students, and as learned from this study, HESA graduate students with a desire and the financial means (affordability) have the greatest intent to study abroad. Related to teaching, it would be helpful for study abroad professionals to understand what HESA graduate students that desire to study abroad value and wish to gain (e.g., gain cultural competence, improve foreign language skills, receive course credit) from such an experience. That information would aid study abroad professionals to better understand the desirable components to be made available in specific study abroad course design for HESA graduate students. Specific to HESA graduate programs at institutions, programs tend to include small cohorts of students. Bernstein, Paine, Smith, and Galblum (2001) noted that cohorts develop strong student networks which aid in professional development for the future. It would be manageable to have a faculty or study abroad professional member in each program, whether a campus or online-based cohort, distribute a survey or explore creating focus groups inside or outside of class time each year to stay current on the values desired of students regarding study abroad.

Preparing HESA graduate students to be globally competent is a goal of institutions today, which is confirmed through the efforts to internationalize the higher education curriculum (ACE, 2016). Institutions, specifically HESA programs, could

cultivate desire to study abroad in HESA graduate students by reminding the students of the CAS Standards (CAS, 2018), which were created to standardize the learning outcomes gained from graduate preparation programs used in HESA programs. One CAS Standard includes International Student Programs and Services (CAS, 2018). Reminding HESA graduate students (who are preparing for the HESA profession) of their expectation to advance global competences as a professional could cultivate desire to study abroad of HESA graduate students. In addition, cultivating desire in HESA graduate students could be possible by tailoring and offering a study abroad program that includes a professional component or having the study abroad program connect directly to the HESA field.

I found that HESA graduate students with no children and HESA graduate students who previously studied abroad had the highest desire of intent to study abroad. Institutions or even HESA programs could seek out graduate students with one or both of those demographic characteristics and have those students share what influences their desire to study abroad. Learning and understanding what commonalities influences their desire to study abroad could be shared through study abroad opportunity advertisements and during study abroad fairs in an effort to cultivate desire to study abroad and *sell* study abroad to those with less or no desire.

One commonality among HESA programs is that several, if not the majority, of the graduate students in such programs hold a graduate assistantship (Shelton & Yao, 2019). Offering funding (partial or full) through assistantships and time off from the assistantship shows institutions putting forth effort to support campus internationalization efforts by offering funding to study abroad to HESA graduate students holding a graduate

assistantship. A second innovative method of addressing affordability is providing an itemized list of trip costs detailed by individual cost of each component (e.g., travel, lodging, tuition, cultural enhancements, etc.) to demonstrate how much each component cost. This would provide HESA graduates students an opportunity to analyze whether study abroad is of value and affordable.

Generally, HESA programs require graduate students to gain professional experience in the field through self-selected practicum requirements (Shelton & Yao, 2019). In this study, I found that future job prospects had a positive relationship with willingness to pay, such that one focus of a graduate preparation program in HESA could be offering practicum opportunities that have an optional short-term study abroad component, since graduate students found value in study abroad regarding future job prospects. Offering such an opportunity through a practicum experience would allow for expansion of global competencies of graduate students for future professional use.

In this study, willingness to pay (which was generated by future job prospects, family expectations, and administrative support) did not show a statistically significant relationship with intent to study abroad. In addition, family expectations and administrative support did not show a statistically significant relationship with willingness to pay. Thus, examples of practices that would not be beneficial when promoting study abroad for HESA graduate students are: holding informational sessions (on campus or virtually) for families to discuss safety while abroad or having staff from study abroad offices who have never experienced a study abroad opportunity or who are inexperienced promote such opportunities. Instead, as learned from this study, HESA graduate students with high desire of intent to study abroad were those that previously

studied abroad and those without children. Thus, having past participants of study abroad promote such opportunities and explain why they had or do have such a high desire and interest in study abroad experiences could be beneficial in cultivating desire in HESA graduate students regarding studying abroad, which is an initial step to likely increase study abroad intent and participation. Secondly, another valuable practice for HESA graduate students would be having study abroad offices (administrative support) provide as much information as they can on program costs and opportunities for scholarship and aid to help HESA graduate students generate the funding/financial support needed to participate in a study abroad experience.

In summary, HESA programs are continuing to internationalize the curriculum and have expectations of students who enter the HESA field to advance global competencies. I found that HESA graduate students with the highest intent to study abroad are those with a desire with no statistically significant relationship of willingness to pay (perceived value of study abroad) and intent to study abroad. Thus, HESA graduate students without a desire may find other ways to gain global competencies than through a study abroad experience. Since the field of HESA is broad and incorporates several specific focus areas (e.g., civic engagement, social fraternities and sororities, student activities, residence life, and academic advising), it makes sense for HESA programs to create a study abroad program that would be valuable and desirable, which includes and covers all aspects related to HESA such that it could encourage study abroad as the way to gain global competencies.

The information gained in this study should be useful and allow for improvements in HESA programs specifically because (a) prior literature on exactly HESA graduate

students and intent to study abroad using the same variables as in this study is incomplete; and (b) HESA program administrators now have a base knowledge of how to be proactive with regards to study abroad and have a better understanding of HESA graduate students and their thoughts on study abroad, specifically intent to study abroad. The hypotheses that were supported in this study are truly important because it means that graduate students value their emotions and feelings (desire) regarding behavior intent (intent to study abroad), and graduate students find value in study abroad (willingness to pay) regarding future job prospects, which graduate students can control such findings. All in all, graduate students also understand that certain behavior intents (intent to study abroad) are driven by the availability of funding or affordability, which is a less controllable finding of graduate students. This study was innovative in that its focus was very specific (graduate students in HESA and intent to study abroad), which revealed unique findings for the field, which can be furthered and built upon through future research.

### **Future Research**

Predicting intent to study abroad was understood and learned through the self-reporting of participants in this study. Although I did look at indicators that prior research claimed to be somewhat explanatory of intent to participate in study abroad, the behavior of study abroad participation was not directly observed. This study combined with previous research helped better explain study abroad intent through use of a specific framework (Theory of Planned Behavior) and predictive model of study abroad intent.

I found, through research, desire as the greatest influence of intent to study abroad of graduate students. In addition to desire, affordable study abroad programs at



institutions would be deemed attractive (e.g., cognitively and socially, specifically through cultural gains) to graduate students. Thus, as the leading variables among graduate students, desire and affordability, and when combined, created a positive impact on intent to study abroad. Future research should focus upon gaining further knowledge and insight on the desire traits that influence intent to study abroad or influence study abroad participation of graduate students. Desire was a significant influence of intent to study abroad of graduate students (as learned from this study), but the actual traits that spark such desire are unknown. A couple of examples of desirable traits that could be explored are gaining cultural competence and improvement of foreign language skills.

Since the level of desire was differentiated to be highest among graduate students that did not have children and that had previously studied abroad (based off the results from the Wilcoxon Rank Sum-Test noted in Chapter 4), institutions and study abroad offices could first target graduate students with such characteristics to try to increase the rate of study abroad of graduate students, since those with such characteristics had the highest desire of intent to study abroad. In order to know which graduate students on campuses do not have children and which graduate students have previously studied abroad, study abroad offices could distribute surveys electronically to gain such information during graduate student orientation or during the first week of classes in August and January. In addition, as previously mentioned, it would be beneficial for future research to be conducted on desire traits related to intent to study abroad of graduate students. Thus once the graduate students who do not have children and who had previously studied abroad are determined, those individuals would be great data points for the desire traits research.

Overall, a major benefit of this study was that the research approach (theoretical framework, observed variables/survey questions, latent variables, measurement model/multivariate CFA, structural model/regression) was and is innovative. The research approach could be applied to various institutions and populations, but it may be worthwhile to tailor the model in future research to find a model that achieves model fit thresholds. While Schnusenberg et al. (2012) evaluated (a) undergraduates who were (b) business majors attending (c) a single public institution, this study evaluated (a) graduate students, who were (b) one of a variety of related, HESA majors attending (c) one of several institutions (14 public or 1 private) in the southeastern United States. Future research could be expanded to more graduate students in different areas of study, different institution types, and in different regions of the United States. Additionally, if an adequate sample size could be collected, further research could focus on demographics such as how age, year in program, etc., impact a graduate student's intent to study abroad. Determining if the same variables of intent to study abroad existed on different populations is important in order to create study abroad standards across the nation. Furthermore, future studies could benefit from investigating other variables such as perceptions of safety while abroad.

Institutions and more specifically study abroad offices could benefit from distributing surveys or using specific technology to collect data and track graduate student study abroad queries related to study abroad intent. Study abroad offices collecting such information would help researchers, practitioners, and administrators whom have a desire to know more about the variables or factors that drive study abroad intent. The collected data would inform institution personnel and policymakers with

information to guide future decisions on future policies and curriculum that could be used to encourage additional students to study abroad. With the ever changing landscape of higher education, constant data collection is essential to ensure that policies and curriculum stay current and to identify if variables related to intent to study abroad change over time.

With constant data collection, the data must be analyzed. In statistics, there are several data analysis techniques. In the future, one innovative approach is using another form or technique to analyze the complex model in this study. In this study a SEM was used; however, based off results of this study, willingness to pay ranked behind desire and affordability of graduate student intent to study abroad. So, a future analysis might include removing the willingness to pay latent variable and providing a direct path for future job prospects, family expectations, and administrative support into intent to study abroad, similar to desire and affordability.

### **Modifications to Survey and Model**

Potential modifications to the survey could both improve model fit and further support graduate students' intent to study abroad. As previously noted, a modified model may be of better use, as a modified model has the potential to align with the model fit thresholds of GFI and RMSEA. With such an already complex model, lengthy survey, and willingness to pay not being statistically significant with intent to study abroad, removing willingness to pay (and the three associated questions/observed variables) would address one limitation (e.g., length of survey) and could improve model fit (e.g.,  $R^2$ /model variance, GFI and RMSEA).

In addition, willingness to pay displayed a low path coefficient (.12) and was not statistically significant in this study, and a low path coefficient (.17) was identified in Schnusenberg et al. (2012) which focused on undergraduate students. The measurement model loadings for willingness to pay were the lowest of all latent variables in both this study and in Schnusenberg et al. (2012). Were the challenges observed in both this study and Schnusenberg et al. (2012) related to the questions (observed variables) that were used in willingness to pay? The willingness to pay latent variable appeared to be problematic in both studies, and a potential recommendation could be evaluating and modifying the questions if willingness to pay remained in the theoretical framework. Perhaps a future study could utilize the current three willingness to pay questions while developing three new questions for comparison. Or simply, the willingness to pay questions could be reworded in a positive manner rather than in a negative manner.

Since willingness to pay was statistically significant to intent to study abroad for undergraduate students (Schnusenberg et al., 2012) and not statistically significant for graduate students, it is possible that maturational/developmental challenges could account for this finding. Graduate students are generally older than undergraduate students and likely have life and work experiences. Thus graduate students may not find value (willingness to pay) to study abroad while undergraduate students may be looking for experiences (e.g. study abroad) that will assist them in their future life endeavors. In addition, regarding the outcome difference of willingness to pay in this study and Schnusenberg et al. (2012), sample size (171 versus 254 responses) could have impacted the results. However, with such differing results regarding willingness to pay, the plausibility of the model is negatively affected; however, altering or modifying the theory

and theoretical framework (in turn would modify the model) could be beneficial in future research studies.

Another potential modification to the survey was related to the first three questions of the latent variable administrative support. The first three questions, or the first three observed variables (admin1, admin2, and admin3), had a response option of “don’t know.” Removing the “don’t know” option is a suggestion to modify the survey. If removed, those that answered “don’t know” on the survey would be forced to either mark “neutral” for such responses or not answer the questions. However, unanswered questions would affect the usable sample size for the survey.

It is important to note this study focused on intent to study abroad of graduate students, and I wanted to preserve the current theoretical framework and model for an “apples to apples” comparison to Schnusenberg et al. (2012) who explored intent to study abroad of undergraduate students. Thus, alternating or modifying the model and observed variables (questions) are intended for future research efforts.

### **Conclusion**

The rate of study abroad participation for graduate students has continued to decline over the past several years (IIE, 2017). Thus, noting the variables of intent to study abroad of graduate students is very important to attempt to begin increasing the rate at which graduate students study abroad. Taking initiative to increase study abroad rates must be a proactive effort of all those involved at institutions. Study abroad intent in the past focused on the general student population and not on a specific group such as graduate students in the HESA disciplines.

Through this study I found, as noted in the results above, that there was intent to study abroad of graduate students; however, through this study, non-significant variables that were unrelated to graduate students' intent to study abroad are now better understood. Efforts of university administrators and practitioners to better understand study abroad intent allows for active planning on how to assist and meet the study abroad needs of graduate students. I found, through research, that graduate students with intent to study abroad were driven by desire followed by affordability. In addition and as previously discussed, the aspiration to internationalize the educational leadership curriculum (including those studying HESA) and to professionally prepare graduate students in the field, the need to increase study abroad participation of graduate students at institutions in the United States will continue to rise. Understanding intent to study abroad of graduate students is a first step to increase study abroad participation among graduate students; however, institutions and policymakers must delve further and continue to research to pinpoint additional motivators of study abroad intent of graduate students in the United States.

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APPENDIX A

EMAIL TO PROGRAM COORDINATORS

Dear Program Coordinator,

My name is Hannah Holcomb, and I am a doctoral candidate in the Department of Educational Leadership at Mississippi State University. I am working on collecting data for my dissertation research. The purpose of my research is to learn more about the intent to study abroad of graduate students pursuing a higher education administration or student affairs degree. The goal of my research is to find the relationship between specific variables and intent to study abroad.

With the decreased presence of study abroad participation and especially of graduate students at institutions in the southeastern United States, I have a strong desire to collect data from your institution. The study has been approved by Mississippi State University IRB. In addition, I have contacted the IRB Office at your institution and have been given permission to contact you. My hope is that you agree to email my survey link to all the graduate students pursuing a degree (Master or Doctoral) in higher education or student affairs at your institution.

The survey will take approximately 5-10 minutes to complete. Participation in this study is voluntary. Participants will answer survey questions only that they feel comfortable answering. No student name will be stated in the final report. I will have each participant include their institution name on the survey. In addition, I will have the participants include their email address, if they wish, at the conclusion of the survey in order for them to be included in the drawing to receive one of two \$100 Amazon gift cards.

Attached you will find a drafted letter that I would have you send to each graduate student in your program. The letter includes a link to the survey. The survey will close April 23.

Please confirm if you are willing to forward my survey to the requested graduate students.

If you have questions about this research, please contact me at [heh340@msstate.edu](mailto:heh340@msstate.edu). In addition, my advisor, Dr. Leonard Taylor, can be reached at [ltaylor@colled.msstate.edu](mailto:ltaylor@colled.msstate.edu).

Thank you for your consideration.

Hannah Holcomb

APPENDIX B  
SURVEY RECRUITMENT LETTER

Hello,

My name is Hannah Holcomb, and I am a doctoral candidate in the Department of Educational Leadership at Mississippi State University. I am working on collecting data for my dissertation research. The purpose of my research is to learn more about the intent to study abroad of graduate students pursuing a higher education administration or student affairs degree. The goal of my research is to find the relationship between specific variables and intent to study abroad.

The study has been approved by Mississippi State University IRB. The survey will take approximately 5-10 minutes to complete. Participation in this study is voluntary. You will answer survey questions only that you feel comfortable answering. I will have you include your institution name on the survey. Also, I will ask you to please list your email address, if you wish, at the conclusion of the survey in order for you to be included in a drawing to receive one of two \$100 Amazon gift cards.

The link to the survey is below.

[https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/survey\\_study\\_abroad](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/survey_study_abroad)

Please complete the survey by April 23.

If you have questions about this research, please contact me at [heh340@msstate.edu](mailto:heh340@msstate.edu). In addition, my advisor, Dr. Leonard Taylor, can be reached at [ltaylor@colled.msstate.edu](mailto:ltaylor@colled.msstate.edu).

Thank you for your consideration.

Hannah Holcomb

APPENDIX C  
SURVEY

## Survey Statement

The purpose of my research is to learn more about the intent to study abroad of graduate students pursuing a degree in higher education administration or student affairs. The goal of my research is to find the relationship between specific variables and intent to study abroad. This study is being conducted for dissertation research.

I am asking you to please complete an online survey. The survey will take approximately 5-10 minutes to complete. Participation in the study is voluntary.

The study has been approved by Mississippi State University IRB. Data will only be handled in aggregate form. No personal identifiers will be stored or available. You will be asked to list your email address at the conclusion of the survey for a chance to be selected as a winner of one of two \$100 Amazon gift cards. If you are the winner, you will be contacted via email.

Please complete the survey by April 23.

If you have any questions prior to completing the survey, please contact Hannah Holcomb at [heh340@msstate.edu](mailto:heh340@msstate.edu).

Thank you in advance for your participation!

### References:

Hulstrand, J. (2015). Education abroad for graduate students. *International Educator*, 44-47.

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1. If you wish to participate in the research study, please read the definition and accept participation by clicking on the “Agree” button.

### Definition of Study Abroad for the Purposes of this Study

Study abroad is defined as a short-term (eight weeks or less), “project-based learning, where students work with a client or sponsor, or in some kind of group field project related to real life problems” (Hulstrand, 2015, p. 44). More specifically, study abroad for this study includes traveling abroad outside the United States to gain a cultural and educational experience using practice and applied learning to gain skills that are useful upon returning to the United States and can be used in future interviews specific to their field of study.

Agree



2. I am a student pursuing a graduate degree in higher education administration or student affairs in the southeastern United States.  
Yes  
No
3. The university I attend is: (please fill in the blank).  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. I intend to participate in study abroad in graduate school.  
1 - Strongly Disagree  
2 - Disagree  
3 - Slightly Disagree  
4 - Neutral  
5 - Slightly Agree  
6 - Agree  
7 - Strongly Agree
5. I plan to go on a study abroad program in graduate school.  
1 - Strongly Disagree  
2 - Disagree  
3 - Slightly Disagree  
4 - Neutral  
5 - Slightly Agree  
6 - Agree  
7 - Strongly Agree
6. It is my intention to participate in a study abroad program in graduate school.  
1 - Strongly Disagree  
2 - Disagree  
3 - Slightly Disagree  
4 - Neutral  
5 - Slightly Agree  
6 - Agree  
7 - Strongly Agree
7. I aim to go on a study abroad program in graduate school.  
1 - Strongly Disagree  
2 - Disagree  
3 - Slightly Disagree  
4 - Neutral  
5 - Slightly Agree  
6 - Agree  
7 - Strongly Agree

8. I mean to participate in a study abroad program in graduate school
- 1 - Strongly Disagree
  - 2 - Disagree
  - 3 - Slightly Disagree
  - 4 - Neutral
  - 5 - Slightly Agree
  - 6 - Agree
  - 7 - Strongly Agree
9. I am determined to go on a study abroad program in graduate school.
- 1 - Strongly Disagree
  - 2 - Disagree
  - 3 - Slightly Disagree
  - 4 - Neutral
  - 5 - Slightly Agree
  - 6 - Agree
  - 7 - Strongly Agree
10. Even if I can afford to spend on study abroad programs, I will not do so.
- 1 - Strongly Disagree
  - 2 - Disagree
  - 3 - Slightly Disagree
  - 4 - Neutral
  - 5 - Slightly Agree
  - 6 - Agree
  - 7 - Strongly Agree
11. I do not think study abroad programs are worth it.
- 1 - Strongly Disagree
  - 2 - Disagree
  - 3 - Slightly Disagree
  - 4 - Neutral
  - 5 - Slightly Agree
  - 6 - Agree
  - 7 - Strongly Agree
12. I would not pay for a study abroad program even if I could.
- 1 - Strongly Disagree
  - 2 - Disagree
  - 3 - Slightly Disagree
  - 4 - Neutral
  - 5 - Slightly Agree
  - 6 - Agree
  - 7 - Strongly Agree

13. Participating in a study abroad program is within my financial means.
- 1 - Strongly Disagree
  - 2 - Disagree
  - 3 - Slightly Disagree
  - 4 - Neutral
  - 5 - Slightly Agree
  - 6 - Agree
  - 7 - Strongly Agree
14. I can afford to participate in a study abroad program.
- 1 - Strongly Disagree
  - 2 - Disagree
  - 3 - Slightly Disagree
  - 4 - Neutral
  - 5 - Slightly Agree
  - 6 - Agree
  - 7 - Strongly Agree
15. Study abroad programs are too expensive for me.
- 1 - Strongly Disagree
  - 2 - Disagree
  - 3 - Slightly Disagree
  - 4 - Neutral
  - 5 - Slightly Agree
  - 6 - Agree
  - 7 - Strongly Agree
16. I would like to participate in a study abroad program in graduate school.
- 1 - Strongly Disagree
  - 2 - Disagree
  - 3 - Slightly Disagree
  - 4 - Neutral
  - 5 - Slightly Agree
  - 6 - Agree
  - 7 - Strongly Agree
17. I wish to go on a study abroad program in graduate school.
- 1 - Strongly Disagree
  - 2 - Disagree
  - 3 - Slightly Disagree
  - 4 - Neutral
  - 5 - Slightly Agree
  - 6 - Agree
  - 7 - Strongly Agree

18. I desire to go on a study abroad program in graduate school.
- 1 - Strongly Disagree
  - 2 - Disagree
  - 3 - Slightly Disagree
  - 4 - Neutral
  - 5 - Slightly Agree
  - 6 - Agree
  - 7 - Strongly Agree
19. I aspire to go on a study abroad program in graduate school.
- 1 - Strongly Disagree
  - 2 - Disagree
  - 3 - Slightly Disagree
  - 4 - Neutral
  - 5 - Slightly Agree
  - 6 - Agree
  - 7 - Strongly Agree
20. I am eager to go on a study abroad program in graduate school.
- 1 - Strongly Disagree
  - 2 - Disagree
  - 3 - Slightly Disagree
  - 4 - Neutral
  - 5 - Slightly Agree
  - 6 - Agree
  - 7 - Strongly Agree
21. Study abroad programs are attractive to me.
- 1 - Strongly Disagree
  - 2 - Disagree
  - 3 - Slightly Disagree
  - 4 - Neutral
  - 5 - Slightly Agree
  - 6 - Agree
  - 7 - Strongly Agree
22. Studying abroad will give me a competitive advantage in the job market.
- 1 - Strongly Disagree
  - 2 - Disagree
  - 3 - Slightly Disagree
  - 4 - Neutral
  - 5 - Slightly Agree
  - 6 - Agree
  - 7 - Strongly Agree

23. Skills obtained through study abroad would allow me to advance in my career at a greater pace.
- 1 - Strongly Disagree
  - 2 - Disagree
  - 3 - Slightly Disagree
  - 4 - Neutral
  - 5 - Slightly Agree
  - 6 - Agree
  - 7 - Strongly Agree
24. A study abroad program will help me achieve my professional goals quicker.
- 1 - Strongly Disagree
  - 2 - Disagree
  - 3 - Slightly Disagree
  - 4 - Neutral
  - 5 - Slightly Agree
  - 6 - Agree
  - 7 - Strongly Agree
25. My family encourages me to go on study abroad programs.
- 1 - Strongly Disagree
  - 2 - Disagree
  - 3 - Slightly Disagree
  - 4 - Neutral
  - 5 - Slightly Agree
  - 6 - Agree
  - 7 - Strongly Agree
26. My family thinks that a study abroad program is valuable for my personal development.
- 1 - Strongly Disagree
  - 2 - Disagree
  - 3 - Slightly Disagree
  - 4 - Neutral
  - 5 - Slightly Agree
  - 6 - Agree
  - 7 - Strongly Agree

27. My family thinks that a study abroad program is valuable for my professional development.
- 1 - Strongly Disagree
  - 2 - Disagree
  - 3 - Slightly Disagree
  - 4 - Neutral
  - 5 - Slightly Agree
  - 6 - Agree
  - 7 - Strongly Agree
28. Please attempt to answer regardless of whether you have had study abroad experience. My university's study abroad office appears to care for my safety while abroad.
- 1 - Strongly Disagree
  - 2 - Disagree
  - 3 - Slightly Disagree
  - 4 - Neutral
  - 5 - Slightly Agree
  - 6 - Agree
  - 7 - Strongly Agree
  - Don't Know
29. Please attempt to answer regardless of whether you have had study abroad experience. The faculty on the study abroad programs seem to have the knowledge to lead me on the program.
- 1 - Strongly Disagree
  - 2 - Disagree
  - 3 - Slightly Disagree
  - 4 - Neutral
  - 5 - Slightly Agree
  - 6 - Agree
  - 7 - Strongly Agree
  - Don't Know
30. Please attempt to answer regardless of whether you have had study abroad experience. My university's study abroad office and staff has a good reputation.
- 1 - Strongly Disagree
  - 2 - Disagree
  - 3 - Slightly Disagree
  - 4 - Neutral
  - 5 - Slightly Agree
  - 6 - Agree
  - 7 - Strongly Agree
  - Don't Know

31. My university's study abroad staff seems helpful in providing necessary information.
- 1 - Strongly Disagree
  - 2 - Disagree
  - 3 - Slightly Disagree
  - 4 - Neutral
  - 5 - Slightly Agree
  - 6 - Agree
  - 7 - Strongly Agree
32. My university's study abroad study abroad staff seems adept in dealing with problems.
- 1 - Strongly Disagree
  - 2 - Disagree
  - 3 - Slightly Disagree
  - 4 - Neutral
  - 5 - Slightly Agree
  - 6 - Agree
  - 7 - Strongly Agree
33. My university's professors seem qualified at leading study abroad programs.
- 1 - Strongly Disagree
  - 2 - Disagree
  - 3 - Slightly Disagree
  - 4 - Neutral
  - 5 - Slightly Agree
  - 6 - Agree
  - 7 - Strongly Agree
34. My university seems to have the required expertise for study abroad programs.
- 1 - Strongly Disagree
  - 2 - Disagree
  - 3 - Slightly Disagree
  - 4 - Neutral
  - 5 - Slightly Agree
  - 6 - Agree
  - 7 - Strongly Agree
35. Have you previously participated in a study abroad program?
- Yes, as an undergraduate student
  - Yes, as a graduate student
  - No

36. Have you studied a foreign language (mark all that apply)?  
Yes, in elementary and/or high school  
Yes, in college  
Yes, in graduate school  
No
37. What degree are you seeking?  
Master of Science  
Master of Arts  
Master of Education  
Doctor of Philosophy  
Doctor of Education
38. What year are you in your program?  
First  
Second  
Third  
Fourth  
Fifth  
Sixth  
Other
39. Is your academic program?  
Campus-based  
Online  
Hybrid
40. Do you identify as (mark all that apply)?  
Male  
Female  
Gender nonconforming  
Transgender  
Other  
Prefer not to answer
41. How do you describe yourself (mark all that apply)?  
American Indian or Alaskan Native  
Asian  
Black or African American  
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander  
White  
Other  
Prefer not to answer



42. What is your age?

18-24

25-34

35-44

45-54

Above 54

43. What is your marital status?

Married

Divorced

Separated

Widowed

Unmarried

Other

Prefer not to answer

44. Do you have children?

Yes

No

45. What is your current employment status?

Full-time employment

Part-time employment

Unemployed

Self-employed

Homemaker

Retired

46. Please list your email address below. You will be entered into a drawing to receive one of two \$100 Amazon gift cards. If you are the winner, you will be contacted via email.

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APPENDIX D  
EMAIL EXCHANGES



Schnusenberg, Oliver <oschnuse@unf.edu>

Tue 10/30/2018 6:56 AM

Mark as unread

To: Holcomb, Hannah;

• You replied on 12/4/2018 1:21 PM.

Hi Hannah!

I apologize for the delayed response. Feel free to use our questions! We are flattered by the citation.

Good luck with your dissertation!

Best,  
Oliver

Sent from my iPhone

On Oct 29, 2018, at 11:27 PM, Holcomb, Hannah <[hholcomb@colled.msstate.edu](mailto:hholcomb@colled.msstate.edu)> wrote:

Hi Dr. Schnusenberg,

I hope this email finds you doing well. I wanted to reach out again to ask if I have your permission to use the 31 questionnaire items from your 2012 study, "Predicting Study Abroad Intentions Based on the Theory of Planned Behavior," as part of my survey for my dissertation? I may tailor select questions to better fit my study and use a 7-point Likert scale rather than a 5-point Likert scale. I am looking at very similar variables of study abroad intent of graduate students in educational leadership, and your questions are very fitting for my study.

I look forward to hearing from you!



Schnusenberg, Oliver <oschnuse@unf.edu>

Fri 12/7/2018 7:16 AM

Mark as unread

To: Holcomb, Hannah;

• You replied on 3/2/2019 6:27 PM.

Hannah:

That's fine. We're excited you're using our study. You have our permission.

Best,  
Oliver

Sent from my iPhone

On Dec 7, 2018, at 8:04 AM, Holcomb, Hannah <[hholcomb@colled.msstate.edu](mailto:hholcomb@colled.msstate.edu)> wrote:

Hi Dr. Schnusenberg,

I hope you are doing well, and I apologize for contacting you again this week. However, I am working through my IRB right now and trying to get it submitted as soon as possible.

I am hoping to get the okay from you regarding the email I sent this past Tuesday. I know there are several attachments that I have to submit with my IRB application, and I will include our email exchange that indicates your permission to use parts from your 2012 study. Thank you so much, and I look forward to hearing from you.

APPENDIX E

IRB PROTOCOL APPROVAL LETTER

