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Does Attachment Style, Personality, and Intercultural Effectiveness Impact The Intent to Study Abroad

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Study Abroad

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Trinity College

Fall 2021- Spring 2022

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Acknowledgments

I would like to thank my faculty advisor Professor Anselmi for her support and encouragement throughout the entire process. I would also like to thank her for her helpful feedback during the revision process. I would also like to thank Professor Senland for her constant encouragement and assistance with data collection.

I would like to thank all members of the Senior Thesis Colloquium including professors that took the time to provide us with additional information and advice about the thesis process. Thank you to my senior thesis peers in the colloquium who provided an engaging place to bounce ideas off each other and for your constant support.

I would like to thank Rob Walsh for his assistance in helping me find articles for my literature review, Dave Tatum for his assistance with developing my survey in Qualtrics, Nancy Becerra-Cordoba for providing me a list of with potential participants, and to the Psychology Department for your support.

Finally, I would like to thank my friends and family for their continuous encouragement and advice throughout this process.

Abstrast

Research studies have shown that there is a relationship between attachment, personality and adjustment. This present study examined the impact of attachment style, personality, and intercultural effectiveness on an individual's intent to study abroad. I predicted that those with secure attachment would be more likely report an intent to go study abroad than those with insecure attachment. I also predicted that students with high levels of extraversion, openness, agreeableness, and conscientiousness would be more likely to abroad then those with high levels of neuroticism. Lastly, I predicted students with high levels of intercultural effectiveness would be more likely to go abroad. Attachment style was measured by the Experience in Close Relationship – Revised scale (Fraley, Waller, and Brennan, 2000). Personality was measured by the Big Factor Inventory scale, a 44-item questionnaire (John and Srivastava, 1999). Intercultural effectiveness was measured by the Intercultural Effectiveness Scale (Portalla and Chen, 2010). The results indicated there was no relationship between attachment style and intent to study abroad. However, results showed there was a relationship between gender and attachment in regards to intent to study abroad. The results also demonstrated a significant relationship between extraversion and intent to study abroad. However, there was no significant difference found between openness, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and neuroticism and intent to study abroad. Finally, contrary to my prediction, no relationship between intercultural effectiveness and intent to study abroad was found.

Does Attachment Style, Personality, and Intercultural Effectiveness Impact The Intent to Study Abroad?

Introduction

Close your eyes. Imagine you are seven-years-old and about to jump into a pool you have never been in before. Not only have you never been in it before but you do not know any of the other children in it. Do you immediately jump in or do you first dip your toe into the water to feel the temperature? While this seems like a basic question, there are numerous factors that might ultimately play into your final decision. You might have initially intended to jump into the pool, but before you could, you saw another child feel the water and hesitate. You might have wanted to test the water first, but saw someone roll their eyes at your uncertainty and so you jumped to prove you were not afraid. Or maybe seeing that eye roll hurt your feelings to the point where you decided that you do not want to be friends with these children and so you go home. We make thousands of decisions a day. Some are split-second decisions and others involve contemplation. But have we ever stopped to think what factors play a role in our decision-making process? Why do some people happily jump into the unknown without a second thought while others need to tread slowly, carefully weighing their options before making a decision?

While it may seem to be a simple answer that those who are brave will jump and those who are scared will test the water, it is much more complex than that. Decision-making involves numerous factors. And while the choices that might have given our seven-year-old selves pause might no longer even register as a big decision as we gain more life experience, they are only replaced other choices. One of the most common questions a college student is asked is whether or not they are going to take advantage of their school's study abroad program. These programs

allow students to continue their education while immersed in a foreign culture. Programs can range from a semester to a full academic year. Over time, these programs have become increasingly more popular. In the academic year of 2018-2019, 347,099 students opted to study abroad (NAFSA, 2021). This is a 1.6% increase from the previous year (NAFSA, 2021). At Trinity College over 60% of the student population studied abroad at one point in their academic career ("Get to Know Us," n.d.). However, just like the decision whether or not to jump into a strange pool, college students must decide if they are willing to jump into a strange country and not for a brief swim, but for months. With that in mind, this current study examined why some students decide to take this opportunity while others opt not to. The study investigated the connection between attachment style, the Big Five personality traits, intercultural effectiveness and one's intent to study abroad. The findings from this study can provide insight to the factors that may explain student choices that may lend to positive outcomes for their academic and interpersonal development.

Attachment Theory

The theory of attachment was formulated by John Bowlby in the 1960s, with many of its tenants further developed by Mary Ainsworth. According to Bowlby, the concepts of attachment describe one's ability to form and maintain relationships with others. He suggested that children's attachment to their primary caregiver helps them understand and process their emotions, as well as form their beliefs about relationships. While this theory first applied to mothers and their infants, it has now grown in scope to apply to an individual's relationships during adolescents and adulthood. (Trudeau, 2017).

In the 1970s, Ainsworth developed a way to test Bowlby's idea of attachment theory using the Strange Situation, where a child is briefly separated and then reunited with their

caregiver. The behavior of the child during these segments is used to determine their attachment style. According to Trudeau (2017), four different types of attachment styles were developed from observations of children's reaction in the Strange Situation: secure, avoidant, anxious, and fearful avoidant. Attachment styles are "determined by an individual's view of self – whether positive or negative – and view of the other person in the relationship – either positive of negative" (Trudeau, 2017, p.14). Attachment styles serve as a blueprint for a child's future interactions. According to attachment theories, attachment styles remain relatively constant throughout life and influence the ways we interact with others.

Secure Attachment

Secure attachment, also referred to as a positive attachment, is the most desired attachment style. A secure child in the Strange Situation would be upset when the caregiver left but would calm down and be able to interact with their caregiver once they returned. Secure attachment implies that a person is comfortable expressing emotions openly. Individuals with secure attachment have been found to have higher social competencies, lower aggression, and more friendships (Zimmermann, 2004). Secure attachment is associated with greater peer and school integration. Increased independence, greater perspective taking, and positive conflict resolution has been linked with a secure attachment style (Trudeau, 2017).

Insecure Attachments

Insecure attachment implies that a person has a difficult time making emotional connections with others. These individuals typically have a negative view of themselves or others (Trudeau, 2017). There are three types of attachment styles that fall under insecure attachment: avoidant, anxious, and fearful avoidant. Individuals with insecure attachment have

been linked to being more antagonistic and anxious. These individuals tend to romanticize relationships.

Avoidant Attachment

Individuals with avoidant attachment often perceive themselves as 'lone wolves': strong, independent, and self-sufficient; not necessarily in terms of physical contact, but rather on an emotional level (Trudeau, 2017). They have a positive view of themselves but a negative view of others. Avoidant attachment individuals tend to ignore stressful situations instead of dealing with them. They have a difficult time expressing emotions and receiving support from others. In the Strange Situation, the child with avoidant attachment is distressed when their caregiver leaves but ignores the caregiver when they return and have limited interaction with their caregiver and their environment.

Anxious Attachment

Individuals with anxious attachment value their relationships highly, but are often anxious and worried that their loved ones are not as invested in the relationship as they are (Trudeau, 2017). These individuals constantly worry they will be rejected or separated from their partner or loved ones. They have a negative self-view and low self-esteem (Trudeau, 2017). In the Strange Situation, children experience distress when the caregiver leaves and are inconsolable when the caregiver returns.

Fearful Avoidant Attachment

Fearful Avoidant Attachment characterizes an individual who exhibits unstable and ambiguous behavior in their social bonds (Trudeau, 2017). These individuals tend to believe they are unlovable and do not trust people. Fearful avoidant individuals have a negative view of themselves, as well as others. They have a fear of abandonment which leads them to having

commitment issues. They also tend to have higher levels of anxiety due to the fear of getting hurt by others (Li et al., 2021). In the Strange Situation, the child does not have a clear pattern of behavior. This type of attachment style is also known as disorganized attachment.

Attachment and Adjustment

Adjustment is defined as the process of adapting to a new environment. While there are many factors that impact one's ability to adjust, attachment style is a key one. According to Kurland (2012), a secure attachment has been connected to low levels of home sickness, low dropout rates, and higher academic performance. In contrast, those with an insecure attachment show the opposite results. Insecure students have higher levels of home sickness, higher dropout rates, and lower academic performance. Students with a secure attachment also show higher levels of social competence leading them to be able to successfully navigate new situations such as college transition (Kurland, 2012). This suggests that attachment style plays an important role in college adjustment and eventual success.

Several studies have investigated the impact of secure attachment on adjustment. Kurland (2012) examined the relationship between attachment to parents and how students in functioned in college for first year students. The results indicated that first-year students who described their parental attachment styles as positive, reported moderately high social competence ratings and had an easier time adjusting college. Students with an insecure attachment style had a harder time adjusting to college life, establishing a clear link between attachment style and college adjustment.

Attachment and Psychological Wellbeing

Research has shown that there is a connection between attachment style and psychological distress. Individuals with insecure attachment have been found to be prone to

greater levels of depression and anxiety than those with a secure attachment (Rice et al., 1995).

Individuals with an insecure attachment style do not handle the stress and anxiety of new

situations as well as those with securely attachment (Kurland, 2000). This can therefore

negatively impact a student's ability to successfully transition from academic success in high

school to success in college.

Not only does attachment style impact one's emotions, but it can also influence one's

behavior. Levenswaard (2017) analyzed the connection between insecure attachment and

solitude. Her results indicated that avoidant and anxious attachment styles were linked with a

preference of solitude. There was also a connection between insecure attachment and the fear of

rejection, meaning a reluctance to seek out people or new experiences. Those with insecure

attachment style were found to be less involved in school and academic related activities. An

opposite effect was found for individuals with a secure attachment. They tended to be more

comfortable exploring new environments.

The Relationship between Attachment and Study Abroad

Research conducted by Trudeau (2017) found that having a secure attachment style

increases a student's ability and desire to actively participate in the college experience. In this

study, she examined students who had studied abroad for longer than six weeks, and showed that

83.3% of students who studied abroad in the fall semester were classified as secure. In the spring

semester, 59.26% of those who studied abroad were identified as secure. The results

demonstrated that those with a secure attachment were more likely to study abroad.

While attachment style is one important factor in the decision to study abroad, additional

factors have also been found to be important, including personality and ability interact with

others who may be different than you.

Personality

Personality can be defined as a set of behaviors that an individual consistently displays across time and situations (Ching, 2021). The primary model of personality used by researchers is the five-factor model of personality, which describes five dimensions that characterize individual differences. These five dimensions are more commonly known as the "Big Five," and are openness, extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and neuroticism (Ching, 2021).

Openness

Openness describes an individual who is imaginative, independent minded, and has divergent thinking. People with high levels of openness are interested in intellectual interests and culture intelligence; they have broad interests. They also tend to be more open to new experiences, such as ordering the most exotic thing on a menu or traveling to new places (John & Srivastava, 1999).

Extraversion

Extraversion describes an individual who is talkative, social, and assertive. People who are extraverted were commonly labeled as animated. They tend to be excited when approaching new environments. (John & Srivastava, 1999). These individuals like being the center of attention and meeting new people.

Agreeableness

Agreeableness describes an individual who is good natured, co-operative, and trusting (Wang & Ching, 2015). These individuals tend to be more social and communal orientated towards others. Individuals with high levels of agreeableness tend to be more adaptive and tend to be involved in charity work such as volunteering at homeless shelters (John & Srivastava, 1999).

Conscientiousness

Conscientiousness describes an individual who is responsible, organized, and reliable. People who are conscientious have the ability to control their impulses and engage in goal directed behaviors. They think before they act and can delay gratification. Delayed gratification is the ability to delay immediate gain to earn a greater reward. They are described as having the desire to achieve by engaging in work and persisting until they have completed the task (John & Srivastava, 1999).

Neuroticism

Neuroticism indicates an individual who is anxious, disposed to depression, and worries a lot. They tend to be emotionally unstable and vulnerable. They are prone to mood swings and often over analyze situations. The more neurotic a person is can predict how likely they will interpret an event as threatening or difficult. (John & Srivastava, 1999). Individuals with neurotic tendencies struggle to adapt to new events and find themselves easily stressed.

Personality and Study Abroad

Leong (2007) examined the relationship between multicultural personality factors (cultural empathy, open-mindedness, social initiative, emotional stability, and flexibility), which are subgroups of the Big Five factors and adaptation. The study consisted of students who went abroad and students who did not go abroad. The results showed that students who studied abroad had considerably higher scores on four out of five dimensions of personality: agreeableness, conscientiousness, openness, and extraversion. Results from students who opted not to study abroad showed that they were lacking the personality traits such as agreeableness, conscientiousness, openness, and extraversion. These traits are key features in predicting an individual's cultural adaptation.

Research has revealed that certain personality characteristics have been found in students who decide to study abroad. Higher levels of extraversion, agreeableness, openness, conscientious, and lower levels of neuroticism have consistently been associated with students in this group (Niehoff et al., 2017).

Bakalis and Joiner (2004) investigated the role of personality and the decision to study abroad. Participants in this study were divided into two categories: exchange students and non-exchange students. Exchange students were found to have a higher level of openness than non-exchange students. Exchange students were also found to be more comfortable with uncertainty than the non-exchange students. Bakalis and Joiner (2004) suggested that openness could be a valid predictor of whether or not a student decides to study abroad.

Gregory- Siy Ching (2021) examined the role personality plays in study abroad difficulties. The study consisted of a 1958 volunteer study abroad students in Taiwan. The average age of these participants was 26 years old. In order to measure personality traits, Ching used the BFI. The results indicated students studying abroad had high levels of openness and agreeableness and low levels of neuroticism. Neuroticism was found to be correlated with difficulty studying abroad. This result suggests that the two personality traits, openness and agreeableness, play an important role in studying abroad.

Wang and Ching (2015) investigated the role of personality in a successful studying abroad experience in various foreign student groups in Taiwan. The study consisted of a total of eight hundred and eighty-eight foreign students. The participants consisted of international students, Mainland Chinese students, Oversea Chinese students, and Hong Kong students. The average age of participants was 21 years old. In order to examine their personality, they used the BFI. The results revealed that students studying abroad had high level of openness,

agreeableness, conscientious, and extraversion and low levels of neuroticism. It was concluded that personality does play a role in having a successful experience studying abroad.

While not specifically related to intention to study abroad, it is important to examine the role personality has on an individual's adjustment in foreign countries. Caligiuri (2000) examined whether personality traits could be used to predict who would want to terminate an international assignment. Participants in the study were American employees working in foreign countries. The participants completed the Big Five inventory survey and were asked if they would like to end their assignment early if it would not affect their careers. The study found that extroversion, agreeableness, and emotional stability were negatively associated with the desire to return to America. These results suggested that personality factors can be used a predictor to determine who would be more successful on international assignments.

Personality traits have been used to predict outcomes in decision making, intercultural effectiveness, and cultural adjustment. A study by Awais Bhatti et al., (2014) investigated the effects of personality as predictors of abroad study adjustment. The participants consisted of 231 expatriates working in Malaysia. The results found that extroverts had the talkative and assertive skills necessary to help them adjust to their new environment. These skills also helped them develop new friendships. The results also indicated that those who were agreeable were seen as being kind, sympathetic, and affectionate. These traits allowed them to have an easier time adjusting to the new environment. Conscientious was linked with having a better job performance and being more motivated to engage positively with their host country. High levels of openness also played a role in adjusting to a foreign country. The results showed that open individuals who have a wide interest and imaginative thoughts have an easier time adjusting than those who lack personality. Lastly, those who scored high on levels of neuroticism were found to

have a harder time adjusting. Emotional stability is an important aspect of a successful study abroad experience. It helps an individual not only tolerate cultural differences but also handle difficult situations.

Intercultural Effectiveness

Intercultural effectiveness refers to one's ability to interact and adjust adroitly with another human being (Wang and Ching, 2015). An intercultural effective person is able to discriminate which verbal and nonverbal behaviors and communication styles are the most suitable in specific intercultural encounters (e.g., meeting someone who speaks a different language or someone from a different religion). An intercultural effective person displays respect and acts under the set of rules, values, and assumptions that govern the host culture. Intercultural effectiveness decreases an individual's chance of failing in an international environment. This trait allows an individual to accept and interact with other people's cultures.

Intercultural Effectiveness and Study Abroad

Intercultural effectiveness is also a behavioral aspect of intercultural competence. Intercultural competence refers to one's ability to effectively function in different cultures. Intercultural competence is an important aspect for those who are considering employment in foreign countries. Studies have examined the impact intercultural competence has on one's intent to study abroad. In a study by Wickline et al. (2020), it was found that students who chose to study abroad had higher intercultural competence scores than students who did not intend to study abroad.

Similar results were found in a study by Günçavdı and Polat (2016). They examined the level of intercultural competence in international students at Kocaeli University. The results indicated that international students' level of intercultural competence was high compared to the

non-international students. These results suggest that intercultural competence development is often a crucial part of broader institutional goals, such as global citizenship and engagement.

Similar results were found in a study by Leong study (2007). This study investigated the level of intercultural effectiveness in Singaporean undergraduate students who had gone abroad compared with those who had not. The results showed that those who had gone abroad were found to have higher levels of intercultural competencies, suggesting a link between intercultural effectiveness and a successful study abroad experience.

Gaps in Literature

Previous research studies have consistently shown that attachment style, personality, and intercultural effectiveness have an impact on adjustment. Most of the previous studies, with the few exceptions, have focused on how these factors tend to change while studying abroad or after a student has studied abroad. Furthermore, while these factors have been examined independently on different groups of individuals but as far as I am aware, there has been no study studying all these factors on the same group of students. A more comprehensive study is needed to gain a better understanding on the role attachment style, personality, and intercultural effectiveness has on potential study abroad students. Therefore, the goals of the study are to understand whether attachment style, personality, and intercultural effectiveness plays a role in one's intent to study abroad.

Hypotheses

Based on previous research, the following hypothesis were developed.

H1: Students with secure attachment will be more likely to indicate an intention to study abroad than those with avoidant, anxious, or fearful-avoidant attachment.

H2: Students who score high on extroversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness will be more likely to indicate an intention to study abroad.

H3: Students who score high levels of neuroticism will be less likely to indicate an intention to study abroad.

H4: Students who score high on intercultural effectiveness scale will be more likely to indicate an intention to study abroad.

Method

Participants

My sample consisted of 99 Trinity College undergraduate students, out of the 150 who only responded to the demographic questions. The response rate was 30%. The participants consisted of 34 males, 62 females, 2 non-binary/third gender, and 1 prefer not to say. The participants ranged from 18 to 20 years old. The participants were from the first-year (50.5%) and sophomore year (49.5%) classes. The participants races ranged from: White/Caucasian (63.6%), African-American (2%), Latino/Hispanic (10.1%), Asian (9.1%), two or more (12.1%), and other (3%).

Participants also self-reported how likely there were to go abroad. 50.5% reported they were extremely likely to go abroad, 20.2% reported they were somewhat likely to go abroad, 9.1% reported that were neither likely or unlikely to go abroad, 14.1% reported they were somewhat unlikely, and 6.1% reported they were extremely unlikely to go abroad.

Participants were from all regions of the United States: 59% of participants were from the Northeast (Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, New York, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New Jersey, Pennsylvania), 2% of participants were from the South (Maryland, Delaware, West Virginia, Virginia, DC, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama, Arkansas, Mississippi, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Texas), 4% of participants were from the West (Montana, Wyoming, Colorado, New Mexico, Arizona, Nevada, Utah, Idaho, Washington, Oregon, California), 7% of participants were from the Midwest (North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, Minnesota, Iowa, Missouri, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Michigan, Wisconsin), and 21% of participants were from outside of the United States.

When asked where the participants wanted to study around, it was reported the 79% of the students wanted to go to Europe, 2% wanted to go to Australia, 1% wanted to go to Asia, 4% wanted to go to Africa, and 15% were undecided.

It was reported that 18.4% had previously been to the place they wanted to study abroad, and 81.6% reported they had never been to the place where they wanted to study abroad. 27.5% reported that they knew someone else who was going to the same place, while 72.4% reported they did not know anyone doing the same program. Lastly, when asked where they planned to live, 75.8% reported in a dorm, 12.4% reported with a host family, and 10.3% reported other.

Design and Procedure

Participants were asked to complete an online survey that was distributed by Trinity email. The study received approval from the Institutional Review Board. Participants were incentivized to participate with six $20 Amazon Gift Cards that would be randomly determined after the study was completed. A sample of 500 Trinity College first-year and sophomore

students were provided by the college's Institutional Research Center. Reminder emails to complete surveys were sent out to students twice a week for five weeks.

Participants completed the 10 to 15 minute-long survey on a personal device of their choosing. In addition to questions about participants and their intention to study abroad, the survey questions aimed to measure the participants attachment style, their personality, and their intercultural effectiveness. The survey was created using Qualtrics and was distributed between February 23rd to March 31st.

Survey Measures

The survey consisted on four sections: Demographics and intention to study abroad, the Experience in Close Relationships - Revised Scale, the Big Five Inventory, and the Intercultural Effectiveness Scale.

Demographics. Nine demographic questions aimed to identify the participants' gender, grade level, ethnicity, hometown location, intent to study abroad, where they wanted to go abroad, did they know someone going abroad, and where did they plan on living, if they were interested in studying abroad. See Appendix A.

Experience in Close Relationships – Revised Scale: The Experience in Close Relationships - Revised Scale was used to measure attachment style. This survey questionnaire was adapted from Fraley, Waller, and Brennan, (2000) Experience in Close Relationship's Scale. The survey consists of 36 items: 18 relating to avoidant attachment and 18 relating to anxious attachment. Participants used a seven-point scale from 1 (disagree strongly) to 7 (strongly agree). The two sets of items were organized separately to analyze the participants' avoidant attachment and anxious attachment. Fourteen items were reversed scored. Participants were then assigned scores for their levels of avoidance and anxiety. Low secures in both categories (four or below)

translated to secure attachment. High scores in both categories (four or above) translated to dismissive, fearful avoidant attachment. High scores in avoidance but low scores in anxiety translated to dismissive attachment. High scores in anxiety but low scores in avoidance translated to preoccupied attachment. Cronbach Alpha reliability for the Anxiety scale was .93 and .95 for the avoidance scale, which is considered reliable. See Appendix B.

The Big Five Inventory: The Big Five Inventory was used to measure personality. The survey was developed by John and Srivastava (1999). The survey consists of 44 items: eight relating to extraversion, nine relating to agreeableness, nine relating to conscientiousness, eight relating to neuroticism, and ten relating to openness. Participants used a five-point-Likertype, with ratings from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), that were broken into five different categories of personality: extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and openness. Sixteen of the questions were reversed scored. Cronbach Alpha reliability of the BFI is computed at .74, which is considered highly reliable. See Appendix C.

The Intercultural Effectiveness Scale: The Intercultural Effectiveness Scale developed by Portalla and Ming Chen (2010) was used to measure intercultural effectiveness. The survey consisted of 20 items. Participants used a five-point-Likertype, with ratings from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Cronbach Alpha reliability of the IES was computed to be at .85, which is considered to be highly reliable. See Appendix D.

Results

Attachment Style

A one-way analysis of variance was conducted to explore the impact of attachment style on intent to study abroad. There was no significant difference in attachment style among those fearful avoidant ($M = 4.29$, $SD = 1.20$), dismissive ($M = 4.00$, $SD = 1.41$), preoccupied ($M = 3.45$,

$SD = 1.51$), and secure ($M = 3.78$, $SD = 1.42$), F (3,52) =.796, $p = .25$ (1-tailed), contrary to my hypothesis.

Although not one of the study's original hypotheses, an additional analysis was conducted to investigate the role of gender and attachment, categorized as secure or insecure, on intent to study abroad, using a 2 x 2 factorial ANOVA. The main effect for attachment was not statistically significant, F (1,51) = .033, p =.857, partial eta squared =.001. The mean for insecure attachment was 3.93 (SD=1.36) and the mean for secure was 3.88 (SD=1.33). The main effect for gender was not significant F (1,51) =3.41, p =.071, partial eta squared =.063. The mean for males was 3.29 (SD=1.26) and the mean for females was 4.18 (SD= 1.29). However, an interaction between gender and attachment was significant, F (1,51) =4.51, p =.047, partial eta squared =.075. Males and females who had insecure attachment were equal in their intention to study abroad. However, females who are securely attached are more likely to state an intention to study abroad than males who are securely attached. See Figure 1.

Personality

A Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was computed to assess the relationship between personality and intent to study abroad. There was a positive correlation between extraversion and intent to study abroad, $r = .204$, $N = 80$, $p = .036$ with R^2 =.04. High extraversion scores were related to higher intention to study abroad (see table 1). Extraversion scores accounted for 4.16% of the variance in scores on intention to study abroad. There was no significant correlation between intention to study abroad and agreeableness, openness, conscientiousness, and neuroticism. Table 1 shows the correlation for each measure.

Intercultural Effectiveness

A Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was computed to assess the relationship between intercultural effectiveness and intent to study abroad. There was no significant correlation between intercultural effectiveness and intent to study abroad, *r= .040, N=95, p=*.351 with $R^2 = .0016$.

Discussion

This study investigated the impact that attachment style, personality, and intercultural effectiveness has on a student's intent to study abroad. A survey was distributed to Trinity College students to measure both their attachment style and their desire to study abroad. I focused on whether a student's attachment style (secure or insecure) affected their intent to study abroad. I predicted that students with a secure attachment would be more likely to study abroad than students with an insecure attachment. I also examined the impact personality has on one's intent to study abroad. Specifically, I focused on the personality traits of extraversion, agreeableness, openness, conscientiousness, and neuroticism. I expected that students with high levels of extraversion, agreeableness, openness, and conscientiousness would be more likely to want to study abroad. Lastly, I assessed the bearing intercultural effectiveness had on one's intent to study abroad. I projected that students with a high level of intercultural effectiveness would be more likely to state an intention to study abroad. The results of the study provide insight as to why some students are more open to studying abroad than others.

Influence of Attachment

Overall, no significant difference was found between a student's attachment style and their willingness to going abroad. However, the disruption generated from Covid-19 could be a factor in understanding the findings which are contrary to previous research (Trudeau, 2017). It

is possible that the reason some Trinity College students responded less interest in studying abroad was due to a reluctance to miss another semester on campus. Having already missed out on much of the typical college campus life experience due to Covid-19 restrictions, some students might be inclined to stay with their friends rather than study abroad. Furthermore, while insecure attachment can lead individuals to become more isolated, it also may help alleviate the stress of forming new relationships as they are not inclined to be social. Therefore, depending on the individual, insecure attachment may encourage or prohibit them from studying abroad. Consequently, attachment style may not be as impactful as previously thought about a student's intent to study abroad in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Gender and Attachment

It was found that males with insecure attachment were more likely to report an intention to study abroad than those with secure attachment. Conversely, it was found that females with insecure attachment were less likely to report an intention to study abroad than those with a secure attachment. These results could be explained by the possibility that men with insecure attachment are not attached to Trinity College and therefore may be motivated to explore other places. In regards to women, it may mean that they feel they have a safe base at Trinity College, which could encourage them to explore new places knowing they have a safe place to fall back on.

Furthermore, males with an insecure attachment may be less likely to get homesick if they do not feel a strong attachment to their friends and family. While homesickness may prevent males with a secure attachment from going abroad, it may have no impact on males with an insecure attachment. For males, an insecure attachment may act as a protective factor against stressful situations, such as going abroad. Additionally, those who have a dismissive attachment,

describing themselves as emotionally independent and did not value friendships in the same way as those who are securely attached. While not specifically analyzed in this study, it might be easier for males with dismissive attachment to leave their friends and family as they are not attached to them.

Studying abroad can be an isolating experience. As individuals with insecure attachment have been found to prefer solitude, studying abroad might not be the deterring factor it is for others. In a pandemic environment, the experience may allow this individual to maintain their typically emotionally distant relationship from family and friends.

Influence of Personality

Students who were more extraverted indicted a higher intention to study abroad. However, there was no significant difference between openness, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and neuroticism and one's intent to study abroad as reported in prior research (Wang and Ching,2015). This may be attributed to the fact that extraverts may have an even stronger desire to interact with other people after being quarantined for more than a year due to the pandemic. During the academic year of 2020-2021, many Trinity College students were quarantined to their dorm rooms, which restricted their personal interactions to mainly their roommates. Many classes were moved online and recreational activities were severely limited. These factors may have resulted in restricting some students' social circles. Such a limited environment may have been challenging for extroverts resulting in a stronger need for them to seek out different environments, especially those related to study abroad.

Another important factor to consider is whether the student is going aboard alone or with friends. Students who score high on openness, agreeableness, and conscientiousness may still be reluctant to go abroad by themselves. Furthermore, extroverts usually have an easier time

making new friends and forming close relationships with their host families, unlike their introverted counterparts. This difficulty in making such personal connections could be a contributing factor in an introvert's decision not to study abroad.

Furthermore, those who scored high on openness might be open to new people, but that openness might not extend to new experiences or experiences that have uncertainty or a high degree of risk associated with them. Agreeableness and conscientiousness may be helpful personality traits when an individual is studying abroad, but it may not impact their intent to study abroad. This finding of the study also showed the impact of neuroticism did not play a role in a students' intention to study abroad, perhaps again due to the heightened level of stress for this type of decision for all students. Lastly, this finding suggests that the intent to study abroad may be driven by external reasons (e.g., friends are going abroad or for academic purposes) rather than internal reasons (e.g., personality).

Influence of Intercultural Effectiveness

Intercultural effectiveness had no significant impact on student's intent to study abroad. These results may be attributed to the type of measure that was used. In retrospect, the Intercultural Effectiveness Scale may be better suited for measuring how intercultural effectiveness may change after going abroad rather than how it can impact intent to study abroad. Furthermore, intercultural effectiveness was measured as a whole rather than divided into the five subcomponents: Behavioral Flexibility, Interaction Relaxation, Interactant Respect, Message Skills, and Identity Maintenance. However, due to the method used to analyze the data, it is unknown if these subcomponents could separately play a role on an individual's intent to study abroad.

Limitations

Although my study indicated significant results for two factors: gender and extraversion, there are ways to improve this research study. My data were collected using a self-reported survey. A self-reported survey poses the risk of participants not being entirely truthful with their answers. The surveys asked personal questions about how students view themselves, others, and their relationships. Even though the surveys were anonymous, the participants may have been more liberal in their responses to make themselves appear in a better light.

Moreover, the sample population was very small. Only 99 students responded out of 500 recipients of the survey. In addition, the majority of students in the study were female (62.6%). This impacted the generalizability of the study.

Thirty-four percent of my participants only completed the demographic part of the survey, and only 45% of fully completed the survey. This directly affected the last measure of the survey, the ECR-R, which had 55 participants.

The Covid-19 pandemic acted as another limitation. Due to the pandemic, abroad programs were cancelled during the 2020-2021 academic year. This limited my sample population to the first-year and sophomore class. Furthermore, students may be less inclined to study abroad as they already lost a part of their time at Trinity College and may not want to spend any additionally time off campus. Given the variable nature of the pandemic in countries that students might be interested in studying abroad, that factor might have skewed the study results. Lastly, the participants in the study were from a variety of places. Several participants already live abroad, meaning they might consider coming to Trinity College as their abroad experience, and be less inclined to go abroad to a different place.

Implications and Future Research

While there are a number of studies looking at factors that can predict interest in studying abroad, they have not studied multiple factors with the same population. More importantly, the majority of research has focused on how factors change while or after an individual who has a study abroad experience.

More research could be done on analyzing the impact of attachment style. Researchers could examine if attachment style plays a role in where an individual will decide to live while abroad (i.e., dorm or host family). They could also investigate if the proximity of an individual's hometown to their college campus impacts whether they will go abroad. In addition to looking at intent to study abroad, research needs to continue to explore the population of students who are abroad.

Additional studies could examine other areas in which personality plays a role in an individual's college career. For instance, are certain types of personalities more likely to be involved in sports as opposed to debate teams? Broadening the scope of the impact of personality may provide additional insight into the choices an individual makes about studying abroad and what role it might play in their life.

Researchers could also further investigate intercultural effectiveness. There are different subcategories of intercultural effectiveness; Behavioral Flexibility, Interaction Relaxation, Interactant Respect, Message Skills, and Identity Maintenance, which might show differences in the changes that occur for individuals after they study abroad.

Lastly, future studies should also focus on the role gender plays in one's intent to study abroad. In order to better understand why insecure males and secure females are more likely to intend to study abroad additional research needs to occur.

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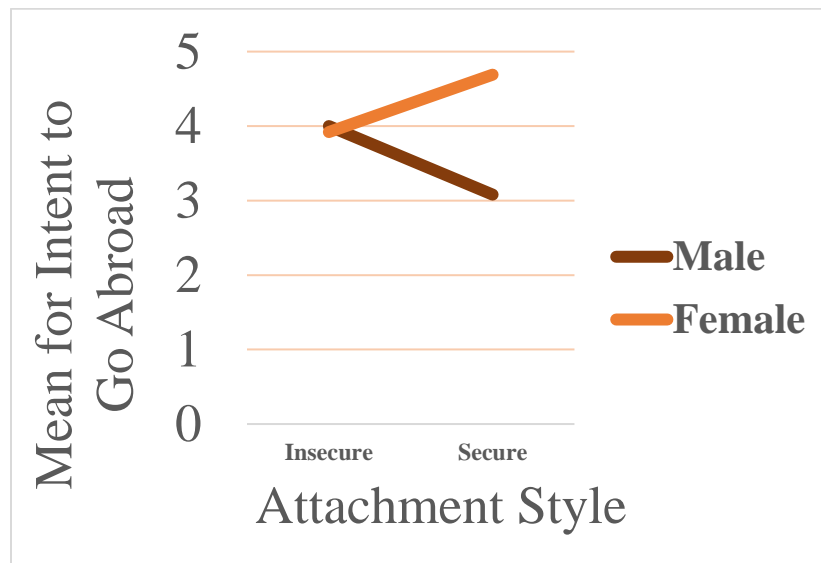
Figures and Tables:

Table 1: Personality Correlations

Measure	1	2	3	4	5
1 Abroad	-				
2 Extraversion	.20*	-			
3 Openness	.07	.17	-		
4 Neuroticism	-.02	-.32**	-.10	-	
5 Agreeableness	-.10	.32**	.41**	-.38**	-
6 Conscientiousness	-.01	.41**	.26*	-.16	.45**

*correlation is significant at .05 level (1- tailed)
**correlation is significant at .01 level (1- tailed)

Gender

Figure 1: Gender and Attachment Style and Intent to Study Abroad

Appendix A: Demographic Survey and Intent to Study Abroad

Gender:

- o Male
- o Female
- o Transgender
- o Non-binary
- o Other
- o Prefer not to say

Grade Level:
- o First – Year
- o Sophomore

What is your ethnicity
- o Caucasian
- o African- American
- o Latino or Hispanic
- o Asian
- o Native American
- o Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- o Two or more
- o Other or unknown
- o Prefer not to say

Where are you from:

_____

How likely are you to study abroad?
- o Extremely Unlikely
- o Somewhat Unlikely

- o Neither Likely or Unlikely
- o Somewhat Likely
- o Extremely Likely

What abroad program do you plan to pursue?

_____

Have you traveled to this place before?

- o Yes
- o No

Even if you are not friends with somebody, do you know anyone going to the same study abroad program?

- o Yes
- o No

Where do you plan on living?

- o Dorm
- o Host Family
- o other

Appendix B: Experience in Close Relationships Scale (ECR-R)

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
I'm afraid that I will lose this person's/others love	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I prefer not to show this person/others how I feel deep down	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I often worry that this person/others will not want to stay with me	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I feel comfortable sharing my private thoughts and feelings with this person/others (R)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I often worry that this person/others don't really love me	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I find it difficult to allow myself to depend on this person/others	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I worry that this person/others won't care about me as much as I care about them	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I am very comfortable being close to this person/others (R)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I often wish that this person's/other's feelings for me were as strong as my feelings for them	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I don't feel comfortable opening up to this person/others	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I worry a lot about my relationship(s)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I prefer not to be too close to this person/others	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

When this person/others are out of sight, I worry that they might become interested in someone else (and leave/exclude me)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I get uncomfortable when this person/others want to be very close	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
When I show my feelings for this person/others, I'm afraid they will not feel the same way about me	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I find it relatively easy to get close to this person/others (R)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I rarely worry about this person/others leaving me (R)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
It's not difficult for me to get close to this person/others (R)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
This person/others make me doubt myself	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I usually discuss my problems and concerns with this person/others (R)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I do not often worry about being abandoned (R)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
It helps to turn to this person/others in times of need (R)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I find that this person/others don't want to get as close as I would like	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I tell this person/others just everything (R)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Sometimes this person/others change their feelings about me for no apparent reason	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I talk things over with this person/others	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
My desire to be very close sometimes scare this person/others away	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I am nervous when this person/others get too close to me	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I'm afraid that once this person/others gets to know me, they won't like who I really am	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I feel comfortable depending on this person/others (R)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
It makes me mad that I don't get the affection and support I need from this partner/others	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I find it easy to depend on this person/others (R)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I worry that I won't measure up to other people	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I find it relatively easy to get close to this person/others (R)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I rarely worry about this person/others leaving me (R)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
It's not difficult for me to get close to this person/others (R)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
This person/others make me doubt myself	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I usually discuss my problems and concerns with this person/others (R)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Appendix C: Big Five Inventory (BFI)

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
Is talkative	○	○	○	○	○
Tends to find fault with others	○	○	○	○	○
Does a thorough job	○	○	○	○	○
Is depressed, blue	○	○	○	○	○
Is original, comes up with new ideas	○	○	○	○	○
Is reserved	○	○	○	○	○
Is helpful and unselfish with others	○	○	○	○	○
Can be somewhat careless	○	○	○	○	○
Is relaxed, handles stress well	○	○	○	○	○
Is curious about many different things	○	○	○	○	○
Is full of energy	○	○	○	○	○
Starts quarrels with others	○	○	○	○	○
Is a reliable worker	○	○	○	○	○

Can be tense	○	○	○	○	○
Is ingenious, a deep thinker	○	○	○	○	○
Generates a lot of enthusiasm	○	○	○	○	○
Has a forgiving nature	○	○	○	○	○
Tends to be disorganized	○	○	○	○	○
Worries a lot	○	○	○	○	○
Has an active imagination	○	○	○	○	○
Tends to be quiet	○	○	○	○	○
Is generally trusting	○	○	○	○	○
Tends to be lazy	○	○	○	○	○
Is emotionally stable, not easily upset	○	○	○	○	○
Is inventive	○	○	○	○	○

Has an assertive personality	○	○	○	○	○
Can be cold and aloof	○	○	○	○	○
Perseveres until the task is finished	○	○	○	○	○
Can be moody	○	○	○	○	○
Values artistic, aesthetic experiences	○	○	○	○	○
Is sometimes shy, inhibited	○	○	○	○	○
Is considerate and kind to almost everyone	○	○	○	○	○
Does things efficiently	○	○	○	○	○
Remains calm in tense situations	○	○	○	○	○
Prefers work that is routine	○	○	○	○	○
Is outgoing, sociable	○	○	○	○	○
Is sometimes rude to others	○	○	○	○	○
Makes plans and follows through with them	○	○	○	○	○
Gets nervous easily	○	○	○	○	○
Likes to reflect, play with ideas	○	○	○	○	○
Has few artistic interests	○	○	○	○	○
Likes to cooperate with others	○	○	○	○	○
Is easily distracted	○	○	○	○	○
Is sophisticated in art, music, or literature	○	○	○	○	○

Appendic D: Intercultural Effectiveness Scale (IES)

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
I find it is easy to talk with people from different cultures.	○	○	○	○	○
I am afraid to express myself when interacting with people from different cultures.	○	○	○	○	○
I find it is easy to get along with people from different cultures.	○	○	○	○	○
I am not always the person I appear to be when interacting with people from different cultures.	○	○	○	○	○
I am able to express my ideas clearly when interacting with people from different cultures.	○	○	○	○	○
I have problems with grammar when interacting with people from different cultures.	○	○	○	○	○

I am able to answer questions effectively when interacting with people from different cultures.	○	○	○	○	○
I find it is difficult to feel my culturally different counterparts are similar to me.	○	○	○	○	○
I use appropriate eye contact when interacting with people from different cultures.	○	○	○	○	○
I have problems distinguishing between informative and persuasive messages when interacting with people from different cultures.	○	○	○	○	○
I always know how to initiate a conversation when interacting with people from different cultures.	○	○	○	○	○

I often miss parts of what is going on when interacting with people from different cultures.	○	○	○	○	○
I feel relaxed when interacting with people from different cultures.	○	○	○	○	○
I often act like a very different person when interacting with people from different cultures.	○	○	○	○	○
I always show respect for my culturally different counterparts during our interaction.	○	○	○	○	○
I always feel a sense of distance with my culturally different counterparts during our interaction.	○	○	○	○	○
I find I have a lot in common with my culturally different counterparts during our interaction.	○	○	○	○	○
I find the best way to act is to be myself when interacting with people from different cultures.	○	○	○	○	○

I find it is easy to identify with my culturally different counterparts during our interaction.	○	○	○	○	○
I always show respect for the opinions of my culturally different counterparts during our interaction.	○	○	○	○	○