Third Country Study: The Role of Degree-Seeking International Students as Study Abroad Participants

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INTRODUCTION

- As the US opens its doors to more degree seeking international students, study abroad offices will likely see a rise in the number of international students participating in study abroad programs
- Examining how new groups of students are supported by international affairs offices allows us to begin to understand the ways in which international students' perspectives and development abroad may vary from domestic students
- This study was conducted as a three-phase model to assess the areas of opportunities, obstacles and resources international students encounter as they consider studying abroad

DEFINING TERMS

- Third Country Study Students- matriculating international students at U.S. institutions who have participated in study abroad programs
- GEO-Global Education Oregon, the study abroad office at the University of Oregon
- UO- University of Oregon
- OIA- Office of International Affairs at the University of Oregon

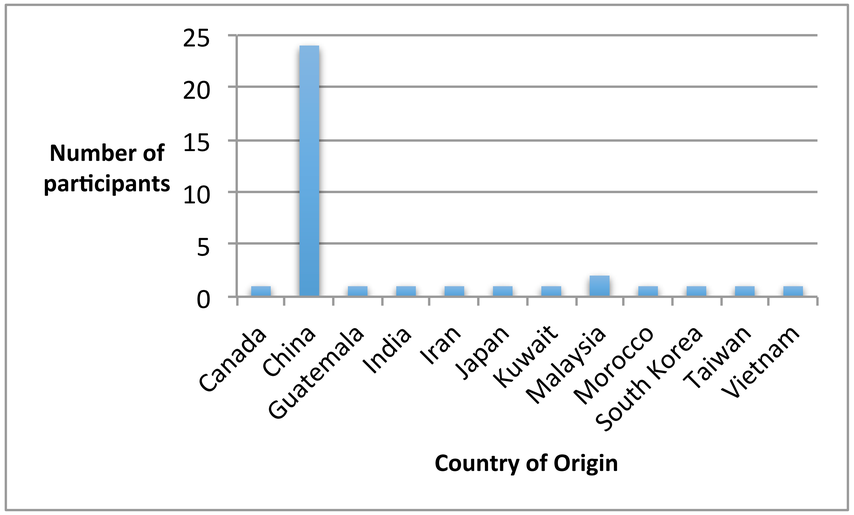
METHODS

Exploratory mixed-methods design

- Online surveys
  - UO undergraduate and graduate matriculating international students
- In-person and Skype interviews
  - OIA staff members (study abroad advisors; international student advisors)
  - UO undergraduate and graduate international students
- Data set 2010-2016: GEO-sponsored study abroad international participants

"Some classes- especially in our program- some classes [are] only open in those different study abroad programs, so that [is] one reason I want to study abroad."

THIRD COUNTRY STUDY STUDENT COUNTRY DISTRIBUTION 2015-16



FINDINGS

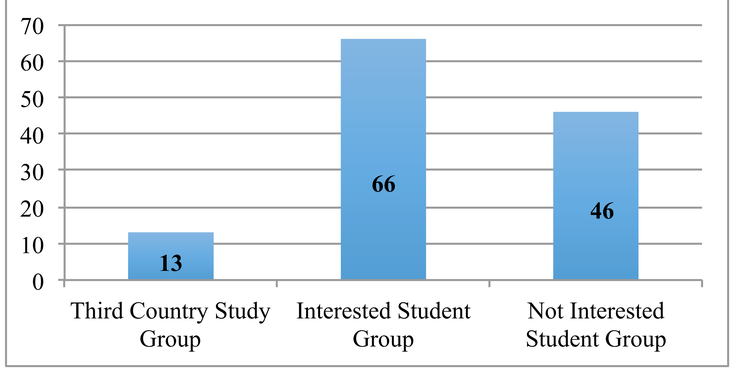
Opportunities
- Receive academic credit towards degree
- Practice a foreign language
- Learn about a new culture
- Can be cost effective
- Develop friendships
- Work closely with faculty

Challenges
- Extra English course requirements restricts international students' schedule flexibility
- Limited financial resources (No FAFSA; limited scholarships)
- Additional language and cultural adjustments that may not be appealing
- Lack of family approval or support
- Misinformation or not receiving information soon enough in their education
- Visa documents

Resources
- Some coursework only offered abroad
- Some coursework fulfills major requirements
- Some study abroad funding available to international students
- OIA staff support system

"Without the scholarship to go and do study abroad in Germany and the Netherlands, I wouldn't consider [going abroad] because studying abroad in America, for me, is already a huge burden for my family."

SURVEY PARTICIPANT BREAKDOWN



FUTURE DIRECTIONS...

- Universities and study abroad offices should begin to create a narrative for why study abroad is important for *all* students and create more inclusion in study abroad advising and outreach
- Engage in inclusive outreach early on in students' academic lives
- Help international students change the narrative of "but I'm already studying abroad"
- Provide resources for international students that address areas of inclusion (financial resources; culturally sensitive study abroad advising)
- Create a dialog between study abroad and international student services to better address international students' needs as they consider study abroad
- Help prepare study abroad advisors and international student advisors to discuss study abroad in a practical manner with international students