

**STUDY ABROAD IN AFRICA: UNDERSTANDING STUDENT MOTIVATION IN  
ORDER TO INCREASE ENROLLMENT**

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Rachael A. English, M.A.

University of Pittsburgh, 2015

The number of students who are studying abroad has been consistently increasing throughout the last several decades. However, a majority of those students are still choosing to study abroad in traditional destinations such as Western Europe, while few choose to study in nontraditional destinations such as Africa, Latin America, or the Middle East. The U.S. Congressional Commission on the Abraham Lincoln Study Abroad Fellowship Program and others have recognized the value of study abroad experiences in nontraditional destinations, calling for an increase in the number of students going to diverse destinations. Through this research, I seek to understand which factors motivate students to choose nontraditional locations, specifically Sub-Saharan Africa, as their study abroad destination. Using Mazzarol and Soutar's (2002) push-pull model, I identify several motivating factors found in the existing literature that have encouraged students to choose specific study abroad destinations. I have conducted a survey of students who have previously studied abroad in Africa, and I have asked them to rank the importance of several of the motivating factors that were proposed in the literature. By understanding which of these motivating factors were most important to students who chose to study in Africa, we can better understand the decision-making process for students interested in nontraditional destinations.

The findings of this survey suggest that the students who are choosing to study abroad in Sub-Saharan Africa are academically focused students who want to do something unique that will set them apart from their classmates and peers. While some students may be initially motivated by touristic opportunities, these students are seeking immersion in a culture that is vastly different from their own, and they desire to engage with local people and learn local languages while abroad. In the Results and Discussion section of this paper, I outline several other factors that participants considered important, and I propose a list of recommendations for study abroad and African area studies professionals, identifying suggestions in order to increase enrollment in African study abroad programs.

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## **PREFACE**

This research is a culmination of various experiences throughout my graduate studies. My survey research, my internship with the African Studies Program, and my participation in the Pitt in Tanzania study abroad program have all informed my research and the interpretation of my results.

I owe much gratitude to my Research Committee for their valuable input, guidance, and support – to Bill Bickel for making the research process seem so straightforward and accessible; to Macrina Lelei for your friendship, guidance, and countless conversations during our time in Tanzania; and to Maureen Porter for your mentorship and friendship, and for helping me see the big picture when I got lost in the details. I would also like to thank the African Studies Program at the University of Pittsburgh for their support, and for allowing me to work with them on this project. I would also like to thank my many other colleagues at the University of Pittsburgh and at Duquesne University for the thoughtful conversations that have led to new insights, and for the many laughs and happy moments that made the research process a little more bearable.

Lastly, and most importantly, I owe everything to my mother, LaVerne English, who has offered me constant support and encouragement, and without whom none of this would have been possible.

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

The field of study abroad is booming and it shows no signs of slowing down. Open Doors Data for the last several years shows that study abroad participation in the United States is at an all-time high and it continues to grow (Institute of International Education [IIE], 2015). In just over two decades, the number of students studying abroad annually has more than quadrupled from the nearly 71,000 students who studied abroad in the 1991-1992 academic year to the 304,467 who studied abroad in 2013-2014 (IIE, 2015).

### **1.1 BENEFITS OF STUDY ABROAD**

Study abroad is a term used to describe a course, or a set of courses, taken abroad at the higher education level for academic credit from the student's home institution. The term does not typically include students who seek a full academic degree at a foreign institution (The Forum on Education Abroad, 2011). American colleges and universities today largely recognize the importance of study abroad opportunities. At least two private, liberal arts colleges have made study abroad a requirement for graduation (Goucher College, 2015; Soka University, 2015). Globalization has increased the need for students to be able to adapt to cultural differences and communicate effectively in cross-cultural situations. Upon graduating, many students will seek jobs with international businesses and corporations, and studies have shown that employers look favorably

on job candidates who have participated in a study abroad experience (Troobof, Stevan, Vande Berg, & Rayman, 2008; Crossman & Clarke, 2010). Study abroad advocates are also quick to note that these experiences can be helpful when seeking employment (Stuart, 2007).

Haddis (2005) suggests that international experiences may lead to improved academic focus upon return from a study abroad program. A statewide study of the University System of Georgia's International Studies Department found that academic performance and graduation rates are higher in students who have participated in study abroad (Redden, 2010). Second language proficiency is found to be significantly increased in study abroad participants, particularly for those who had lived with a host family (Rivers, 1998). Enhanced intercultural development, global perspectives, and personal development are also found to be related to participation in a study abroad experience (Anderson & Lawton, 2011; Dwyer, 2004).

## **1.2 DEMOGRAPHICS OF STUDY ABROAD**

Each year, the Institute of International Education (IIE) collects data on the study abroad participation of students from the United States. The annual publication of the Open Doors report tracks the number of students going abroad, the most popular destinations, and student demographics including academic year, field of study, race, and gender. In the 2015 Open Doors report, IIE reported that 304,467 students from the U.S. studied abroad during the 2013-2014 academic year (IIE, 2015). This number does not include the 22,181 additional students who went abroad for non-credit work, internships, and volunteer experiences (IIE, 2015).

Of those 304,467 students who studied abroad during the 2013-2014 academic year, only 13,266 students chose Sub-Saharan Africa as their study abroad destination, meaning that a mere

4.4% of students who studied abroad chose that destination (IIE, 2015). In fact, the number of students studying in Africa dropped 1.1% from the previous year. In its 2014 Open Doors Report, the IIE reported that 13,411 students studied abroad in Africa (IIE, 2014). The cause of the drop in participation is likely due to the Ebola outbreak that was first reported in March of 2014 (BBC News, 2015). It is likely that the numbers for the 2014-2015 academic year in the 2016 Open Doors report will also show a decline in participation in African programs as news of the outbreak spread only at the end of the 2013-2014 academic year.

Despite this recent, slight decline of participation in study abroad in Sub-Saharan Africa, it is important to note that participation within the region has been slowly but steadily increasing for over a decade (IIE, 2015). In the 2000-2001 academic year, only 2.9% of students chose Africa as their study abroad destination (at that time, statistics for Africa included North African countries as well). By the 2012-2013 academic year, 4.6% of study abroad participants chose programs in Sub-Saharan Africa (IIE, 2015), nearly doubling the percentage of students who choose to study abroad in the region. With the overall growth in study abroad, however, the actual number of students studying in Africa increased from 4,540 students in 2001-2002 to 13,411 in 2012-2013, tripling the number of students studying in region in a little over a decade (IIE, 2015). The current demographics concerning study abroad participation in Africa include only those students who study abroad in a Sub-Saharan destination. As of the 2010-2011 academic year, the Institute of International Education groups North African countries within the Middle East region. As a result of this change in categorization, the reported percentage of students who chose African destinations decreased from 5.5% of the total number of students studying abroad in 2009-2010 to 4.3% in 2010-2011 (Institute of International Education, 2015). Despite suggesting lower levels

of participation within the region, this change of categorization allows for more accurate reporting of the data.

### **1.3 STUDY ABROAD IN NONTRADITIONAL DESTINATIONS**

As student participation in study abroad programs is growing, there has been a push in recent years to offer a wider variety of programs that can fit the needs of a more diverse student population. In 2005, the U.S. Congressional Commission on the Abraham Lincoln Study Abroad Fellowship Program (2005) issued a report discussing the importance of study abroad in the development of internationally competent students. The Commission's report is a frequently cited source in discussions regarding the future of study abroad. In the report, the Commission recommended that in order to increase intercultural competence in the United States, the study abroad field should continue to grow, and there should be increased diversity among participants, institutions, and study abroad destinations. Under the second recommendation of the report, the Commission suggests that efforts should be made to increase the number of students studying in nontraditional destinations including Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Middle East. In order to achieve these goals, the Commission proposed that the federal budget should allow for between \$50 million-\$125 million annually to invest in study abroad opportunities for students, and that funding preference should be given to students applying to study in nontraditional regions (Commission on the Abraham Lincoln Study Abroad Fellowship Program, 2005).

In the study abroad field, the term nontraditional destination is typically used to indicate any region outside of Europe. As Wells (2006) notes:

The primary criterion for being categorized as a nontraditional country is the fact that relatively few American students study there. This general definition is sometimes combined with the qualification of being non-European or non-English speaking. Others classify non-industrial, third-world, or developing countries as nontraditional destinations. (p. 113-114)

This definition of the term nontraditional also implies that the definition will change depending on current trends of study abroad participation. In the latest Open Doors report, IIE reported that 53.3% of students studying abroad chose Europe as their destination. Latin America was the second most popular destination with 16.2% of students choosing to study there, and Asia was close behind with 11.9% (IIE, 2015). However, the term nontraditional destination does often apply to Latin American and Asian countries as well (Commission on the Abraham Lincoln Study Abroad Fellowship Program, 2005).

As a result of the Lincoln Commission's report, the Senator Paul Simon Study Abroad Foundation Act of 2007 was created. The act calls for (a) an increase in the number of students who study abroad; (b) a more diverse study abroad population that mirrors the national higher education student population; and (c) a larger portion of study abroad opportunities to be completed in nontraditional destinations (NAFSA, 2015). The bill seeks to establish a foundation that would offer funding to support the goals of the legislation, and it would allow institutions of higher education to apply for that funding in order to support their efforts to develop study abroad programs in nontraditional destinations (NAFSA, 2015).

The Senator Simon Act was passed twice within the U.S. House of Representatives, and the bill has been introduced in the U.S. Senate (NAFSA, 2015). Although the initiative has not yet been passed through U.S. legislation, the point remains that the study abroad field is aiming to



become more inclusive of underrepresented students, and an emphasis is being placed on encouraging students to choose nontraditional study abroad destinations.

Another popular study abroad initiative funded by the U.S. Congress is the Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship (2015). The scholarship, founded in 2000 and funded through the International Academic Opportunity Act, is a competitive scholarship that gives preference to students with limited financial means and to those from underrepresented demographics in the study abroad field. The scholarship is also meant to encourage students to choose nontraditional study abroad destinations.

Although research on the topic of study abroad destinations is limited, Wells (2006) explores the literature surrounding nontraditional destinations in study abroad. He uses a framework that looks at common rationales for study abroad from the perspective of the student, society, and institutions in order to understand how study abroad in nontraditional destinations may help to facilitate the attainment of these goals. In his review of the literature, Wells found that some of the most common rationales for study abroad among students include global citizenship, workforce preparedness, personal growth, and transnational competence. He suggests that study abroad in nontraditional destinations can lead to a greater understanding of the global economy and employment issues, greater flexibility, better problem solving and language skills, and a greater stretch of beliefs and values, leading to a higher level of attainment for these student goals than would be true for study abroad in traditional destinations. On a societal level, some of the common rationales for study abroad include international and intercultural understanding, international cooperation, national security, and economic advantages. Wells suggests that the potential benefits of nontraditional study abroad destinations may lead to increased firsthand experience with global issues, broader knowledge of critical world regions, increased societal

knowledge in emerging markets, and more globally aware and sensitive citizens. Finally, on an institutional level, common rationales for study abroad include institutional competitiveness, marketing potential, intellectual rigor, and increased learning opportunities. Wells states that the potential benefits of nontraditional destinations may include expanding offerings which could lead to increased institutional competitiveness and niche market possibilities. Though Wells' study is non-empirical, he provides substantial rationale for his claim that nontraditional destinations appear to help students, society, and institutions to better reach their study abroad goals.

One of the most prominent organizations within the study abroad field, NAFSA: Association of International Educators, also promotes the "diversification of destinations" in study abroad. A document published for the NAFSA 2006 Online Expo outlines the benefits of choosing to study abroad in nontraditional locations (Ogden, 2006). Some of the listed reasons are that (a) nontraditional destinations offer unparalleled opportunities for students to pursue a variety of personal, academic, linguistic, cultural, and professional goals; (b) nontraditional destinations provide opportunities for meaningful cultural integration and intercultural learning by engaging with local communities, local leaders, and developing meaningful relationships; (c) potential employers recognize that students who studied abroad in nontraditional destinations have developed a different set of skills; (d) that non-western, nontraditional destinations require more significant changes in attitude, flexibility, and the development of more complex problem solving (Ogden, 2006). The document also lists specific reasons for choosing Africa as a study abroad destination. These reasons include (a) the availability of financial aid for study abroad in Africa; (b) Africa's importance to America's economic well-being and global security; (c) exposure to less commonly taught languages; (d) the increasing involvement of American businesses within

the African region and the need to be able to navigate cultural intricacies; (e) Africa is one of the most cultural and environmentally diverse places on the planet.

Despite the overwhelmingly positive benefits that have been listed here, there have also been those who criticize the initiative to expand student enrollment in nontraditional study abroad destinations. One such critic makes the argument that advocating for study abroad in nontraditional destinations is based on cultural voyeurism, and that those who advocate for study abroad in nontraditional destinations do so in a condescending manner as they seek the “exotic” (Woolf, 2013). Woolf states that the number of students who study in nontraditional destinations is low because students simply do not want to go to these places, and he argues that nontraditional experiences are not inherently “richer” or “deeper” than experiences in traditional destinations, and that by suggesting so, we seek to devalue the study abroad experiences of students who choose to study in Western Europe.

In reaction to Woolf’s points, I do not believe that advocating for the expansion of study abroad opportunities in Sub-Saharan Africa comes from a motive of condescension, rather we advocate for study abroad programs within the region with the hope that students will engage with the local culture in meaningful ways in order to combat many of those condescending views. I also disagree with Woolf’s argument that by promoting study abroad opportunities in nontraditional destinations we seek to devalue the European study abroad experience. I myself completed two study abroad experiences in Spain, later returning to live there for 2 years after I graduated from college. “Richer” and “deeper” study abroad experiences are not merely a result of a student’s destination choice, rather they are facilitated by well-designed study abroad programs that incorporate meaningful conversations and cultural learning while abroad. The world is much larger than Western Europe, and if our goal is to encourage our students to become global citizens, we

would be doing them a disservice by limiting their study abroad experiences to one global region that holds similar values to our own. Our students come with a wide range of interests, backgrounds, and aspirations, and we must offer them the diverse opportunities they are looking for. Contrary to Woolf's argument, I do not believe that the number of students who study abroad in Sub-Saharan Africa is low because students are not interested. I believe that if students had a variety of high quality programs to choose from within the region, we would see an increase in the number of students choosing to study abroad in Sub-Saharan Africa.

While Woolf does not hold study abroad in nontraditional locations in high esteem, he does suggest that language and area studies are good reasons to pursue study abroad opportunities in these regions. I agree with this point, but I would further suggest that exposing students to lesser known regions might also stimulate a student's interest to pick up a less-commonly taught language or pursue area studies as a possibility. In my own case, it was only after I had made the decision to study abroad in Tanzania that I decided to pursue an African area studies certificate. As educators, we should concern ourselves with providing high quality study abroad opportunities across the globe, especially in nontraditional destinations such as Africa.

#### **1.4 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Diversification of destinations in study abroad is part of the popular discourse within the field in recent years. Given the empirical findings and advocacy articles for the various benefits of study abroad experiences as well as governmental support and possible funding opportunities for students who choose to study abroad in nontraditional locations including Africa, I believe it is important to encourage students to participate in study abroad programs in nontraditional locations.

This research will seek to understand what has motivated past participants of African study abroad programs to choose Africa as their destination. I believe that before we can work on increasing the number of students who choose Africa as a study abroad destination, we must first understand which factors have motivated students to enroll in these programs in the past. By understanding what has attracted these students to study in Africa, I hope to be able to better understand the decision-making sequence of current and future study abroad participants in order to be able to better support them in their decision to choose Sub-Saharan Africa as a study abroad destination.

## **1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

My research will seek to answer two questions: First, I would like to better understand which factors motivate and challenge students to choose Africa as a study abroad destination. I expect to find that students will be motivated by a variety of factors, including personal factors, outside factors, social factors, and financial factors. I expect to find that students will be motivated by their own career interests and desires, by specific traits of their study abroad programs, by recommendations from other people, and by study abroad program costs.

Secondly, I would like to better understand the sequence of decision-making when it comes to choosing a study abroad program. Do students always choose a destination first, or are there variations in the study abroad decision-making sequence? I expect to find that for many students, their decision-making process followed the typical sequence of (1) the choice to study abroad, (2) the choice of a destination, and then (3) the choice of a program. Other students, however, may have first chosen a specific program, or they may have been motivated to study abroad as a way to get to a specific destination. By better understanding how students make their study abroad

decisions and which specific factors influence them, we can greatly improve the quality and utility of information that students are given during the study abroad decision-making process.

## **1.6 SITUATING THE RESEARCHER**

My research is informed by many of my own experiences with study abroad. I do not discount the importance of studying abroad in any context, no matter how traditional the destination, as I myself have lived in and participated in multiple study abroad programs in Europe. I was also able to participate in the Pitt in Tanzania program, which allowed me to gain exposure to East Africa, and to understand the study abroad process from the point of view of a student. Participating in the program allowed me the opportunity to talk with participants about their own motivations for participating in the program and to understand their goals while abroad. Similarly, by understanding how programs run within the region, I have been able to offer better informed recommendations for study abroad and African area studies professionals in order to increase enrollment in African study abroad programs.

Having participated in study abroad programs in Western Europe as well as Sub-Saharan Africa, I am able to compare and contrast my experiences within the two regions. While students have the opportunity to develop a wide range of skills through any study abroad experience, I do believe that a different set of skills is required of students who choose to study abroad in nontraditional locations as they must interact with and adapt to belief systems and cultures that are vastly different from their own. These types of interactions require students to evaluate their own belief systems and take a new set of ideas into consideration. I believe that as study abroad

professionals, we should challenge students to step outside of their comfort zones in order to develop these critical thinking and problem solving skills.

Finally, my research is also informed by a year-long internship with the African Studies Program at the University of Pittsburgh, where I was able to have ongoing conversations with professionals in the field regarding study abroad in Africa. These conversations allowed me understand the perspectives of professionals in the field, and to understand the challenges of encouraging students to enroll in programs within the region.

## **2.0 REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE**

### **2.1 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: MAZZAROL & SOUTAR'S PUSH-PULL MODEL**

International education is a broad field that includes student mobility of many types. Two of the major branches of international education involve (1) American students who choose to spend a portion of their academic studies abroad, and (2) international students who choose to seek a four-year degree at an American institution. While differences exist in the way these students make decisions about their education, both groups make one common decision; both must decide on a location for their educational pursuits. While there has not been much research done on the subject of study abroad destination selection, some research has been done on the way international students decide on their study destinations.

Much of the research regarding international students' destination choice is based on Mazzarol and Soutar's (2002) idea of a push-pull model, which suggests that there are some factors that push a student to study outside of their home country, while other factors pull a student toward a particular destination. The most relevant aspect of their findings in terms of my own research would be the significant pull factors that they identified. Based on surveys conducted in four countries—Taiwan, India, China, and Indonesia—Mazzarol and Soutar identified six pull factors that they found to be relevant to destination choice among international students: (a) availability



of information about the host country; (b) family and personal recommendations; (c) cost (e.g. financial, safety, social); (d) environment (climate, study environment, lifestyle); (e) geographic proximity to home country; and (f) social links within their host country. While Mazzarol and Soutar's study looks at important factors in the destination choice of Taiwanese, Indian, Chinese, and Indonesian students, many of the findings may also be applicable to American students when choosing their study abroad destination. The first of their pull factors, accessibility of information regarding destination, could very well be relevant in the context of international student destination choice as well as study abroad destination choice. The information that is available about the prospective host country and the reputation and image that it has in the home country is likely to influence any student's destination decision. Family can also be a highly relevant factor in both cases, particularly among undergraduate students whose parents often have a final say in the study abroad destination. As Metzler (2002) notes, a family's dissenting opinions can be a challenge to getting students to study abroad in Africa in particular.

Another important factor to consider is the students' social ties within the host country, or whether or not the student has had family or friends visit or study in the host country (Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002). In some cases, geographic proximity may also come into play, as a student's parents may be more likely to encourage them to travel to destinations that are more easily accessible from the home country. Cost is another relevant factor for both international and study abroad students, as fees and cost of living will be important for students in both cases. However, Mazzarol and Soutar (2002) also looked at the opportunities available for students to find work abroad, noting that for international students, this may be an important factor. In the case of a study abroad student, employment opportunity is not likely to factor into the student's destination decision, as study abroad students tend to be abroad for shorter amounts of time and they often lack the

appropriate visas needed for employment abroad. Safety costs are also relevant in both cases, as students are more likely to choose a destination that they perceive as having less risk involved. Lastly, the overall environment of the destination will have an effect on the student's decision (Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002). Climate and lifestyle will likely affect the destination choices of both international students and U.S. study abroad students, as students are more likely to choose a country with an image or reputation that matches their expectations for their study abroad experience.

I will use Mazzarol and Soutar's (2002) push-pull model as a framework for my research, specifically the concept of pull factors. While the list of pull factors proposed by their research provides a foundation for understanding student destination choice, it is not exhaustive. I have identified additional pull factors through my review of the literature that various authors have indicated as significant motivating factors in the study abroad/international education destination choice as well. I have reviewed the literature discussing both study abroad and international students' destination choices, as I believe that there may be some similarities in the ways that these distinct groups of students make decisions about their study destinations. While some similarities may exist, I expect to find some differences as well; there may be some factors that are important for international students who study in the U.S. for several years that turn out to be insignificant in the decision-making process of a study abroad student who intends to study abroad for only 2-16 weeks.

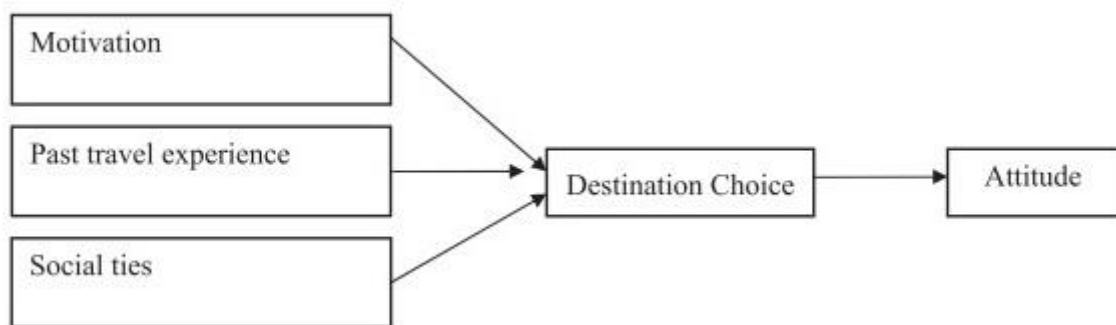
## 2.2 MOTIVATING FACTORS AS FOUND IN THE LITERATURE

Eder, Smith, and Pitts (2010) also conducted research using Mazzarol and Soutar's (2002) push-pull model for international students' destination choice as a conceptual framework. Their aim was to build a new conceptual model explaining the decision-making process of international students. Their research involved online chat interviews with 21 foreign students who were studying in the U.S., and they asked students to list and rank the factors that influenced their decision-making process. This aspect of their research helped inform my own survey design. The study found three major push factors and three major pull factors in the international students' decision-making process, as well as structural factors that included cost and visa issues. The push factors included personal growth, language, and future career goals, and the pull factors included college issues (i.e. factors related to the institution), physical geography, and U.S. culture (Eder et al., 2010). However, in considering their research from the perspective of a U.S. study abroad student's decision-making process, I might categorize these factors differently. For a student choosing to study abroad, language and future career goals might serve more as pull factors than push factors, as they are factors that might encourage a student to choose one destination over another. For example, a student interested in improving their Spanish skills would be more likely to choose Spain or Costa Rica over France or the United Kingdom. In this case, the language is a specific reason that the student sought to study in a particular location. The researchers even quote Student K who stated that "My main consideration was that the country is English speaking" (p. 239), noting the importance of this particular factor in their choice of destination. Similarly, future career goals can be a pull factor as a student who studies international business may be more interested in choosing to study in a country considered to be an economic superpower such as China, while

students interested in public health or international development may choose to study in an African country over a more developed host country.

While I believe that the push, and pull factors mentioned in this study are relevant to international students' destination decisions, I do not believe that the sub-factors are categorized particularly well for U.S. students going abroad. For example, the researchers list “relationships with students of other cultures” under the category of college issues, or institutional characteristics (Eder et al., 2010). They chose to categorize “recommendations from friends” under the institutional characteristics as well, while I would recognize those factors as being more of a social influence than an institutional characteristic. I also believe that the factors that were listed as structural factors—cost and visa issues—could be considered pull factors as well. Cost and visa considerations are likely to influence a student's decision to choose one destination over another.

Nyaupane, Paris, and Teye (2010) use a different conceptual framework for the study abroad decision-making process. They suggest a conceptual model where motivation, past travel experiences, and social ties influence destination choice and the students' attitudes toward that destination (See Figure 1).



**Figure 1.** Conceptual model of mediating role of destination choice on pre-trip attitude formation.

(Nyaupane, Paris, & Teye, 2010)

In their study, Nyaupane, et al. conducted a survey of 136 students who were enrolled in two summer study programs, one in Europe and the other in the South Pacific. The survey included items regarding students' social ties, past travel experiences, motivations, and attitudes toward their destination choices. Using principal component factor analysis and three step mediator analysis, researchers were able to determine that students' destination choices were strongly related to academic motivation and social ties. They also found that the destination choice affected the pre-trip attitudes held toward those destinations, and finally, when looking at all of the predictor variables (social ties, previous travel, and motivation dimensions), only social motivation (in other words, the opinions and beliefs held by their friends and family) was found to be a strong predictor of a pre-trip attitude toward a destination. The finding that the opinions and beliefs of a student's social group will influence their study abroad destination choice is something that I would like to examine in my own research: will students say that their destination choice is strongly influenced by the opinions of their social network?

Lane-Toomey and Lane (2014) conducted a mixed methods research study using focus groups and survey data to find out which factors motivate students to study abroad in the Middle East/North Africa (MENA) region compared to more traditional study abroad destinations. The findings of this particular study are helpful to my research as the population consists of study abroad students partly within the African continent, though the MENA region is not currently included in the statistics of African study abroad participation. The 27-question survey designed by the researchers was given to 601 students in both the MENA region as well as other traditional study abroad destinations, asking students about their financial capital (scholarships available), social capital (support of friends/family/faculty), cultural capital (foreign language ability, travel experience), motivations (career goals), and attitudes. Cross-tabulations and multiple regression

analyses were used to determine which factors were significant in helping students to choose the MENA region over other traditional study abroad destinations (Lane-Toomey & Lane, 2014). The research design was thorough and the authors provided comprehensive rationale for the methods that they used.

Lane-Toomey and Lane found that students who chose to study in the MENA region (a) had more experience with international issues prior to studying abroad; (b) had higher levels of contact with international students before studying abroad; (c) were more likely to participate in extra-curricular activities that focused on international issues before studying abroad; (d) were more likely to take foreign language or diverse cultural topic classes before departure; (e) were more likely to take courses with professors who integrated their own international experience in the classroom; and (f) were more likely to have traveled moderately or extensively prior to study abroad than those who studied in traditional locations (Lane-Toomey & Lane, 2014). Students who chose to study in the MENA region scored higher on measures of financial, social, psychological, and performance risk taking measures. Multiple regression analysis showed that a desire to work for the U.S. government, a willingness to take risks, and previous exposure to international situations were all significant predictors of study abroad destination choice. Students in the MENA region were also slightly more likely to have received scholarships for their study abroad experience. Content analysis of the focus groups with students in the MENA region also revealed common themes of language acquisition, the desire for an “out there” experience, exposure to international issues, a desire for cultural understanding, and career goals (Lane-Toomey & Lane, 2014). In the study’s mixed methods design, the findings of the focus groups and surveys were complementary, offering support for the validity of the study. These findings suggest that aside

from the external pull factors mentioned in many of the other studies, there are a wealth of internal characteristics that contribute to a student's destination choice as well.

In a book published by the Institute of International Education, Macready and Tucker (2011) describe and analyze ways in which international students choose their destination country. Some of the factors that they identified include (a) high quality study opportunities; (b) specialized study opportunities; (c) teaching in a language that students want to learn (target language); (d) traditional links and diasporas; (e) affordable cost; (f) internationally recognized qualifications; (g) good prospects of high economic returns; (h) post-study career opportunities in the host country; (i) good prospects for successful graduation within a predictable amount of time; (j) effective marketing by the destination/institution; (k) home country support for studying in destination country; and (l) helpful visa arrangements for studying and working while studying. Once again, these authors were writing specifically about international students who are pursuing an entire degree in a foreign country. While some of the factors are likely to be relevant to study abroad students' destination choice, other factors may not be so. High quality and specialized study opportunities, cost, target language, and marketing have all been found by other researchers to be important factors in the destination choice of study abroad students (Eder, Smith, & Pitts, 2010; Lane-Toomey & Lane, 2014; Nyuapane et al., 2010; Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002; Gertner, 2010). However, in the case of study abroad students, international qualifications of an institution, prospect of good returns, post-study career opportunities in host country, graduation prospects, and home country support and visa requirements may not be as important in the destination choice as it is for international students. The following table summarizes the findings of motivating factors for destination choice as found in the literature.

**Table 1.** Motivating pull factors for destination choice as found in the literature

Study	Population of Study	Significant Motivating Factors
<b>Ntarangwi (2000)</b>	U.S. students studying in Africa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Touristic motivations</li> </ul>
<b>Mazzarol &amp; Soutar (2002)</b>	International Students from Taiwan, India, China, and Indonesia studying in Western countries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Availability of information regarding host country</li> <li>• Family and personal recommendations</li> <li>• Cost issues (financial, safety, social, etc.)</li> <li>• Environment (climate, study environment, lifestyle)</li> <li>• Geographic proximity to home country</li> <li>• Social links (friends in host country, or having family/friends that had previously studied in host country)</li> </ul>
<b>Nyaupane, Paris, &amp; Teye (2010)</b>	American Students Studying Abroad in Europe/South Pacific	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Academic Motivation</li> <li>• Social Ties - Close Friends Who Live in a Foreign Country</li> <li>• Social Motivation</li> </ul>
<b>Eder, Smith, &amp; Pitts (2010)</b>	International Students studying in the U.S.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Language (listed as a push factor)</li> <li>• Career goals (listed as a push factor)</li> <li>• College Issues (particular features of a given institution)</li> <li>• Physical geography (climate, safety of region, travel opportunities)</li> <li>• U.S. (destination) culture</li> </ul>
<b>Gertner (2010)</b>	U.S. students studying or traveling abroad	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Destination country image</li> <li>• Marketing campaigns</li> </ul>
<b>Macready &amp; Tucker (2011)</b>	International students in general	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High quality study opportunity</li> <li>• Specialized study opportunity</li> <li>• Teaching in a language students want to learn</li> <li>• Traditional links and diasporas</li> <li>• Affordable cost</li> <li>• Internationally recognized qualifications</li> <li>• Good prospects of high returns</li> <li>• Post-study career opportunities in host country</li> <li>• Good prospects of successful graduation within predictable time</li> <li>• Effective marketing by destination/institution</li> <li>• Home country support for going there to study</li> <li>• Helpful visa arrangements for studying, working while studying</li> </ul>
<b>Lane-Toomey &amp; Lane (2012)</b>	American Students Studying Abroad in the MENA region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Desire for a unique experience</li> <li>• Desire to obtain language skills/cultural understanding</li> <li>• Future Career Goals</li> <li>• Had more previous exposure to international issues/travel than students in other destinations</li> </ul>



### **2.2.1 Study Abroad as Tourism**

A majority of the pull factors listed in the previous section were based on the destination decision-making processes of international students. When considering student motivations for study abroad, however, I believe that touristic motivations may be a significant pull factor as well. Ntarangwi (2000) wrote a reflective article in which she discussed similarities and differences between those who go to Kenya as students as opposed to those who visit as tourists. Ultimately, the author concludes that students are essentially tourists who reflect on and write about their experiences, offering the perspective that there may be an overlap in motivations between tourists and students.

Gertner (2010) also writes about the similarities between choosing a touristic travel destination and a study abroad destination. In her research, she notes that places are similar to brands, in the way that the name of a place can evoke different images and ideas. Her study looks at whether the images that people hold of particular places are the same or different depending on one's intention to travel or study abroad in these locations. For the study, 360 students were given a survey, asking them to rate the characteristics of 6 destinations (Canada, England, Australia, Mexico, Spain, and Argentina). Of the 336 valid responses, 165 students were asked to answer the questions as if they were going to study abroad, and 171 students were asked to answer the questions as if they were going to travel for tourism only. Researchers compared the results between groups to check for significant differences. While some slight differences did exist regarding the images of some countries, the study found that overall, there was no real difference in a country's image when it was considered for studying or traveling purposes. The findings of Gertner's study are important when considering the marketing that goes into study abroad

programs, as they indicate that students evaluate study abroad programs in the same ways that they evaluate touristic opportunities. The underlying idea of this study highlights the importance of brand marketing for places, and the author notes that current principles of tourism marketing may be directly applicable to study abroad marketing as well.

### **2.3 CHALLENGES TO PARTICIPATION IN AFRICAN STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS**

While it is important to understand the motivating factors in a student's destination choice, it is also important to consider whether there are any factors that might inhibit a student from choosing a particular study abroad destination. Pires, Marajh, and Metzler (2000) surveyed 40 African study abroad programs as a way to better understand the study abroad offerings within the region. The article lists several concerns for programs in the region: (a) program affordability; (b) lack of institutional support for study abroad and experiential education; (c) student preparedness and cultural adjustment; (d) parental concerns based on the media's portrayal of Africa; (e) unreliability of communications in Africa; (f) political instability; (g) university strikes and disturbances; (h) student health and safety; (i) minority student recruitment; and (j) transferability of academic credits. Similarly, Burn (1985) notes that political instability, high international travel costs, unfamiliarity with non-European foreign languages, limited institutional teaching and library resources, a scarcity of services for foreign students, and a lack of contact between higher education institutions in the U.S. and non-European countries are all impediments to study abroad programs in nontraditional, non-European destinations. These authors both note that there are significant challenges for recruiting students to study in nontraditional destinations such as Africa.

While Burn (1985) lists these challenges to studying in nontraditional destinations as a way to promote European study abroad destinations, Pires et al. (2000) offer a few recommendations for increasing study abroad opportunities in Africa. They suggest that institutions should expand program offerings to specific geographic and disciplinary areas, and they should establish more formal arrangements with institutions in Africa.

Metzler (2002) again attempts to paint a picture of the study abroad landscape in Africa by using previous studies and descriptive statistics to show the current situation and demand for African study abroad programs. At the end of the article, he offers “The Four F’s of Recruitment” to studying in Africa. The text box receives no recognition within the text of the article, and the findings are anecdotal, but I believe they are relevant. These “Four F’s” represent challenges that are present when recruiting students to African study abroad programs, and they include Fear, Finance, Faculty, and Family. The first of these challenges, Fear, recognizes that there are many fears present when students are considering studying abroad in an African country that may not be present in for students considering other destinations—physical safety, lack of infrastructure, and specific disease and illness, for example. Finance is another challenge, as students are often convinced that the costs of programs in Africa will be far more out of reach financially than programs in Europe or Latin America, despite the relatively low cost of living in the region. The third factor, Faculty, can be a strong support for students who are seeking a study abroad experience, and a faculty member who actively discourages a student from participating in an African program can be very persuasive. Finally, a student’s Family can become an obstacle to their decision to study in an African country as families often dissuade students from participating in these programs based on negative images portrayed in the media. These “Four F’s” are anecdotal, but they are important factors to consider if we are interested in enrolling more students

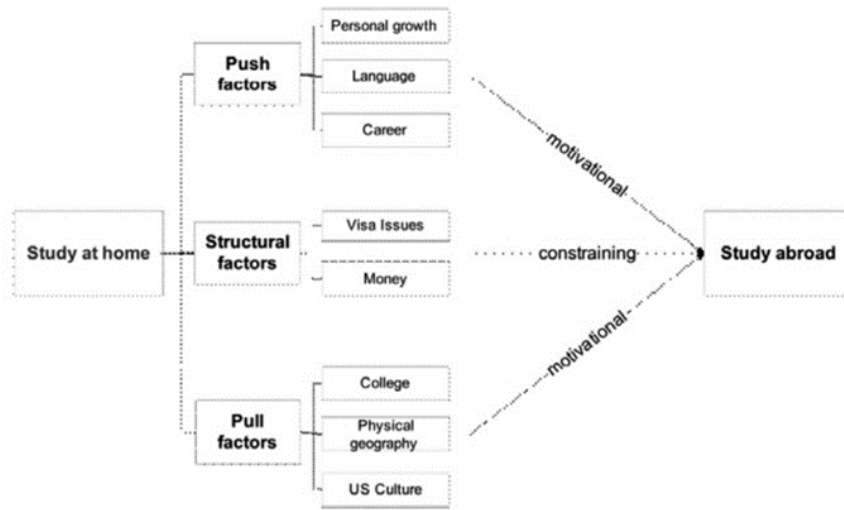
in African programs. I have included these challenges within my research because I believe it is important to take them into consideration. Though I am primarily interested in the factors that motivate a student to choose Africa as a study abroad destination, I recognize that there are particular challenges to studying in the region that must also be addressed. By confronting these challenges, students may also be motivated to choose study abroad programs in the African region.

**Table 2.** Challenges to participation as found in the literature

Author	Population	Significant Challenges to Participation
<b>Burn (1985)</b> (nonempirical)	Discussing the hesitations toward study abroad programs outside of Europe.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Political instability</li> <li>• Higher international travel costs</li> <li>• Unfamiliarity with non-European languages</li> <li>• Limited educational resources at host institutions</li> <li>• Lack of services for foreign students</li> <li>• Little official contact between institutions in the US and the developing world</li> </ul>
<b>Pires, Marajh, &amp; Metzler (2000)</b>	Study abroad programs in Africa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program affordability</li> <li>• Lack of institutional support for study abroad and experiential education</li> <li>• Student preparedness and cultural adjustment</li> <li>• Parental concerns due to the media’s portrayal of Africa</li> <li>• Unreliability of communications in Africa</li> <li>• Political instability</li> <li>• University strikes and disturbances</li> <li>• Student health and safety</li> <li>• Minority student recruitment</li> <li>• Transferability of academic credits</li> </ul>
<b>Metzler (2002)</b>	American students studying abroad in Africa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fear (negative images of Africa)</li> <li>• Finances (prohibitive costs)</li> <li>• Faculty (discouraging participation)</li> <li>• Family (discouraging participation)</li> </ul>
<b>Lane (2003)</b> (periodical article)	American students studying abroad	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stringent curricula</li> <li>• Financial constraints</li> <li>• Lack of faculty participation</li> <li>• Failure to address the needs of nontraditional students</li> </ul>
<b>Eder, Smith, &amp; Pitts (2010)</b>	International Students studying in the U.S.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visa issues</li> <li>• Cost and financial issues</li> </ul>
<b>Macready &amp; Tucker (2011)</b>	International students in general	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Financial impediments</li> <li>• Difficulty obtaining a visa</li> </ul>

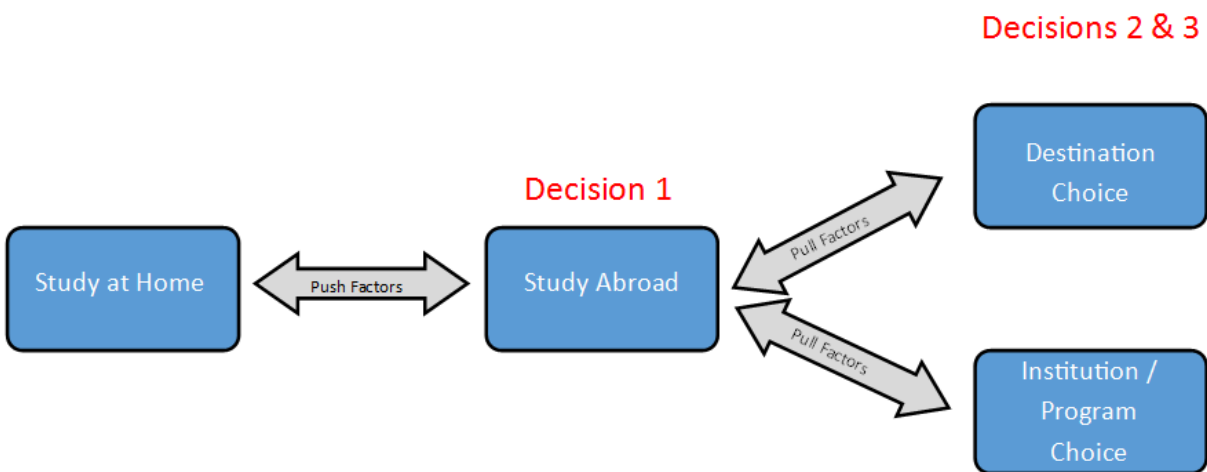
## 2.4 THE STUDY ABROAD DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

Eder, Smith, and Pitts (2010) identified the three phases of the study abroad decision-making process as (1) the choice to go abroad, (2) the destination choice, and (3) the choice of program/institution. After identifying various push and pull factors, the researchers proposed the following model as a representation of the study abroad decision-making process.



**Figure 2.** Eder, Smith, & Pitts (2010) Conceptual framework of the students' decision-making process

The first decision that they identified in the study abroad decision-making process is the decision of whether or not to study abroad, which is influenced by the push factors. The second and third decisions, that is, the destination choice and the choice of institution, would be influenced by the pull factors. The conceptual framework proposed in Figure 2, however, does not show the interaction of the push and pull factors on the different stages of the decision-making process. Figure 3 below depicts my proposal for a conceptual model of the study abroad decision-making process.



**Figure 3.** My conceptual model for understanding the study abroad decision-making process

Using Mazzarol & Soutar’s definitions of push and pull factors, my model suggests that these factors come into play during different phases of the decision-making process. Push and pull factors may also not be defined in the same way by each student, and some factors, such as language or academic goals could be considered as both push factors and pull factors.

Push factors, for example, the desire to engage with a new culture or the desire to study a language not offered at home, are factors that would encourage a student to seek out or commit to a study abroad opportunity. The pull factors such as specific career goals, touristic motivations, or financial concerns would be weighed as a student tries to narrow in on a specific destination or study abroad program. This model more appropriately represents the way I have come to think about the study abroad decision-making process as a result of my review of the literature.

## **3.0 METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN**

I created a simple descriptive, mixed methods, web-based questionnaire in order to collect data for this research. Simple descriptive surveys are useful for describing characteristics of a sample at one point in time (Mertens, 2010). Survey questionnaires can be a helpful way of collecting self-reported data from a larger number of people at one time compared to other research methods (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2009). Some advantages to web-based surveys include convenient access to larger samples, limited costs, fast response times, more interactive and tailored formats, quick troubleshooting, and automated data collection, scoring, and reporting (Mertens, 2010). Web-based surveys do have a disadvantage of being associated with lower response rates, though research has shown that web-based surveys typically have higher response rates among college students, which make up my target population (Mertens, 2010). I used Qualtrics Survey Service, a web-based survey tool, to create and distribute my survey. Qualtrics is the preferred web-based survey tool of the University of Pittsburgh.

#### **3.1.1 Survey Design**

I designed the survey using both structured and unstructured items in the form of open-ended, multiple-choice, and grouping and ranking question formats offered by Qualtrics. The group and

rank question format was the most central to my survey design. This question format asked participants to take items from a provided list, and first group them into one of two categories: Most Important or Least Important. Once the items were grouped appropriately, participants were asked to rank the items in terms of importance to their destination decision, with the most important item being at the top of the list. The format of this question allowed the survey to be interactive, setting it apart from the typical format of most online surveys.

Recent research in marketing has revealed that 66% of emails are opened on a mobile device, meaning that more emails are now opened on mobile devices than on personal computers (Sterling, 2014). I would speculate that for college students, that number might be even higher. The Qualtrics website has a feature that allows the researcher to preview the survey instrument as though it were being opened on a mobile device. I made use of this feature in order to decrease the likelihood of participants dropping out due to device compatibility issues.

Noting that questionnaire length can influence the response rates of web-based surveys (Mertens, 2010), I made sure to include only those items that got to the heart of my research questions. The final survey instrument contained 31 items. I added a progress bar that displayed the percent completed at the top of the page in order to inform participants of the survey's length. Qualtrics reports that the average time it took for participants to complete the survey was 4 minutes and 43 seconds.

Following Mertens' (2010) suggestions for questionnaire formatting, I sought to make my survey instrument attractive and well-organized with a logical sequence, and I included clear instructions on each page. I started the survey with nonthreatening questions to encourage participation. When analyzing the survey results, I noticed that upon reaching the first open-ended question, which asked participants to briefly describe their career goals, 4 participants dropped



out. Open-ended questions are known to have this effect as some participants do not want to take the time to respond to free-form questions (Gay et al., 2009). An additional participant dropped out when asked to report their GPA, 2 more dropped out during the first grouping and ranking question, and 1 dropped out when asked about financial factors. These findings indicate that some sensitive subjects (e.g. GPA and financial information) and some question formats may discourage participants from responding. I did not include an option for participants to decline from answering these questions, although adding the option may have led to better participant retention.

The contents of each question were carefully considered alongside Tables 1 and 2 which noted motivating factors and challenges for destination choice as found in the literature. I then divided those factors into four categories: Personal Factors, Outside Factors, Social Factors, and Financial Factors. See Table 3 below to review the categorization of factors.

**Table 3.** Four groups of factors in study abroad destination choice.

Personal Factors	Outside Factors	Social Factors	Financial Factors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Academic goals</li> <li>•Career goals</li> <li>•Desire for a unique experience</li> <li>•Desire to learn/improve foreign language</li> <li>•Desire to experience a different culture</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Safety concerns</li> <li>•Climate of host country</li> <li>•Lifestyle/culture of host country</li> <li>•Geographic proximity to home country</li> <li>•Quality of academic program</li> <li>•Travel opportunities within host country</li> <li>•Host country’s image</li> <li>•Marketing Campaigns</li> <li>•Specialized study programs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Social contacts in host country</li> <li>•Desire to build a network abroad</li> <li>•Recommendations from friends/family/etc.</li> <li>•Support from friends/family/etc.</li> <li>•Having friends/family who have previously visited host country</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Cost of program</li> <li>•Cost of living in host country</li> <li>•High returns for investment</li> <li>•Availability of scholarships</li> </ul>

I used each of these categories as a separate group of factors for each of the group and rank formatted questions (See Appendix C). The first group and rank question lists all of the Personal Factors as identified in the literature, and it asks participants to group each item as being Most Important or Least Important in their destination decision. Participants were then asked to rank the items in each category in order of importance, with the most important factor being at the top. This question format allows us to rank factors within each group based on the number times it was deemed Most Important by participants.

### **3.1.2 Pilot Testing**

Pilot testing a survey is one way to increase the content validity of the research (Gay et al., 2009). I conducted two pilot tests of the instrument. Upon finalizing the initial instrument, I had 5 colleagues in the African Studies Program review the questions and respond to choices to ensure that all survey items were clearly stated and that response options were comprehensive. I asked my colleagues to identify any ambiguities, and I asked them to make comments about the overall survey experience, asking: (1) how long did it take you to complete? (2) did it have a logical flow? and (3) is anything missing? Based on the feedback of my colleagues, I made some revisions to content, wording, and formatting of the instrument. I then conducted a second pilot test among the same 5 colleagues to ensure that there were no further ambiguities within the instrument before sending it out to participants.

### **3.1.3 Participants**

I used a purposeful criterion sample that included students from the University of Pittsburgh who had previously studied abroad in Africa. I limited the population to students from one specific institution, as I believed that institutional differences could exist in terms of study abroad marketing, program offerings, and scholarships available between schools. Eligible students were identified using a database of previous participants in study abroad programs. I decided to include those students who had studied in Africa within the past 5 years in order to reach the largest number of students possible. The database identified 131 students who had studied abroad between the years of 2010-2015. The range of academic years and the different programs that this sample represents are a strength of this sample, as it allows for a more comprehensive picture than a single year or program could provide.

All participants, as university students, have a university email address. This was the most efficient, comprehensive, and convenient way of communicating with potential participants. Of the list of 131 eligible participants, only 87 participants still had valid university email addresses, meaning that 44 students had graduated or were no longer enrolled in the institution. While I would have liked to have gotten updated email addresses for students who had graduated, there were ethical concerns about acquiring student information from the alumni office as they had not provided their information to be recruited for research.

Of the 87 eligible participants, 37 responded to the survey, making the response rate 42.5%. However, only 29 participants completed the survey in its entirety. Mertens (2010) suggests that a survey response rate of 70% is typically considered to be acceptable. Because of the small population (n=37) of this survey, there are some limitations to the generalizability of the results.

There is no complete demographic information available for the target population, therefore, the generalizability of the results are unknown.

#### **3.1.4 Survey Distribution**

Working on this research in conjunction with the African Studies Program, I had access to the database of students who had previously studied abroad in Africa. One suggestion for increasing the response rate in a survey research is to gain sponsorship from a credible organization (Mertens, 2010). I was able to send out a recruitment email using the email account from the African Studies Program, and the recruitment and consent script were written on behalf of myself and the African Studies Program. I was also able to feature the African Studies Program logo on the online survey.

I sent the initial recruitment email on April 16, 2015, using the African Studies Program's general email account. The email included a consent script (See Appendix B) and a link to the Qualtrics online survey (See Appendix C). I believe that having the endorsement of the African Studies Program, and distributing the recruitment email from a recognized, credible organization, allowed for a higher participation rate than I would have received had I sent the email on my own. The initial email yielded 22 responses. I sent a follow up email on April 23, 2015, which yielded an additional 6 responses.

I believe that a better response rate could have been achieved had the survey been sent a few weeks earlier in the semester. When conducting research with students, it is important to consider the academic calendar (Mertens, 2010). Timing issues with IRB permissions meant that the survey was distributed during finals week of the spring semester, which likely discouraged some students from participating.

I also sent a recruitment email on July 14, 2015 to a group of 14 students who had recently returned from Tanzania. The email yielded 7 additional responses. On July 29, 2015, I sent a follow up email from my own email address, as I myself had been part of this particular group of students, and believed that a more personal email might elicit more responses. This second email yielded 2 additional responses, meaning that the response rate for this second group of students was 64%.

### **3.1.5 Use of Incentives**

The use of incentives has been shown to have a positive effect on survey response rates (Mertens, 2010). Given that the target population for my survey was already small in size, and that response rates among surveys are generally low, I decided to offer incentives as a means of promoting participation. After completing the initial survey questionnaire, participants were redirected to a second, unlinked survey that asked for their name, email address, and whether they would be interested in potentially following up with an interview. A full 22 of the 29 participants who finished the initial questionnaire entered their information in the second questionnaire.

In the initial moments after sending out the recruitment email, a confidentiality setting on Qualtrics left the second survey inaccessible from the initial survey. Two students emailed me within minutes of the survey going live to tell me that they had completed the survey, but were not able to enter their information for the drawing. These students were given the direct link to the second survey, and they were able to enter their information. Both students were recorded as being within the first 10 respondents.

As stated in the recruitment letter, the first 10 respondents each received a \$10 Amazon gift card. The remaining 12 participants who submitted their information were entered to win one of five \$10 gift cards. In order to ensure random selection for the remaining winners, I used a

random number generating website, (Randomnumbergenerator.com, 2015). The numbers selected by the website were 14, 22, 11, 15, and 16. Using the list of participants in the order of their responses, I sent the 14<sup>th</sup>, 22<sup>nd</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>, and 16<sup>th</sup> respondents \$10 Amazon gift cards as well.

I believe that the use of this incentive was effective in encouraging participation. Timestamps on the Qualtrics report indicate that within the first two days of the survey being live, 20 participants had responded to the survey, and by the end of the first week, 22 responses were recorded, likely due to the fact that gift cards would be awarded to the earliest participants. I also believe that the 5 remaining gift cards served as motivation for the later participants, as those participating in July were motivated to respond as they were still eligible to be entered into the drawing.

### **3.2 DATA ANALYSIS**

The data provided by this survey was largely descriptive in nature. Many of the questions were demographic, and the results are reported as such. I have included tables and figures to accurately represent the information obtained from this survey.

Information provided by participants in the form of open-ended questions were coded based on common themes present in their responses. I first read through the data multiple times in order to identify common themes from the responses. I then read through each response individually, assigning a code to each response. Once the items were coded, I grouped responses into categories for analysis of patterns and frequency. The survey items that required coding were items 5, 6, 7, 10, 21, and 29 (See Appendix C). These items asked participants to identify their

major, enrollment in a certificate program, career goals, motivations for studying in Africa, hesitations to studying in Africa, and any additional comments they wished to share.

### **3.2.1 Limitations of Working within Qualtrics**

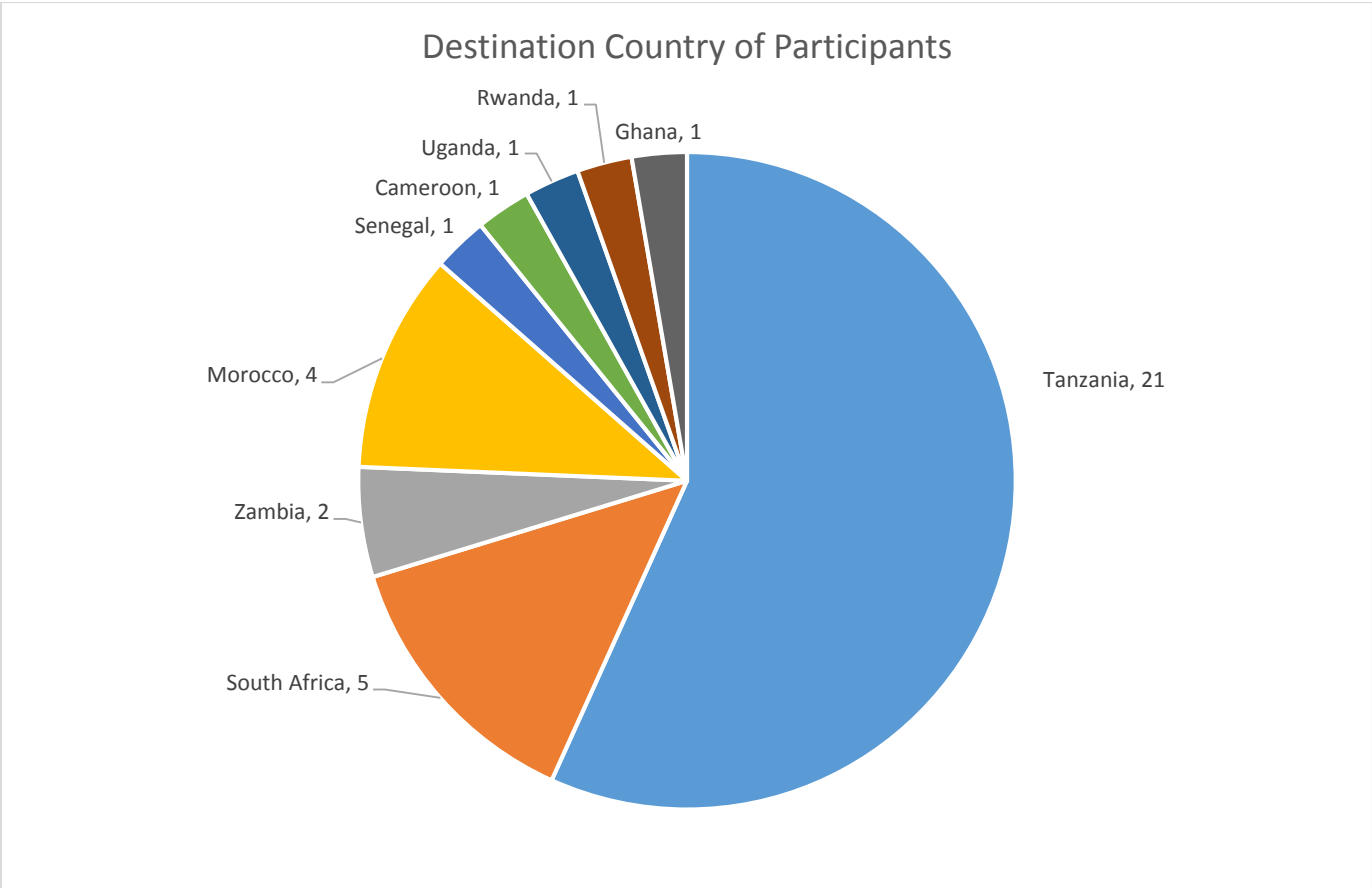
While I believe it would have been interesting and helpful to cross-tabulate demographic questions with specific motivational factors to determine whether specific groups of students found any factors to be especially important, I was not able to do so because of the limitations of the group and rank question format that I used in Qualtrics. When reviewing and analyzing participant responses, Qualtrics offers researchers the option to cross-tabulate data, though it indicates that the option is not available for the group and rank format that I used. I believe that it may have been beneficial to look for differences in how participants of different programs, academic year, and field of study ranked the factors that were important to them. Despite the fact that I was not able to analyze the data in such a way, I do believe that the value of the information that I obtained from the group and rank question format outweighs the disadvantage of not being able to cross-tabulate responses.

#### **4.0 CHAPTER 4: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The survey had a total of 37 respondents (n=37), 29 of whom completed the survey in its entirety. All participants reported having studied abroad in Africa. Participants were 83% female and 17% male. Their demographic makeup was 79% White/Caucasian, 10% Asian, 7% African American, 3% Hispanic, and 3% African.

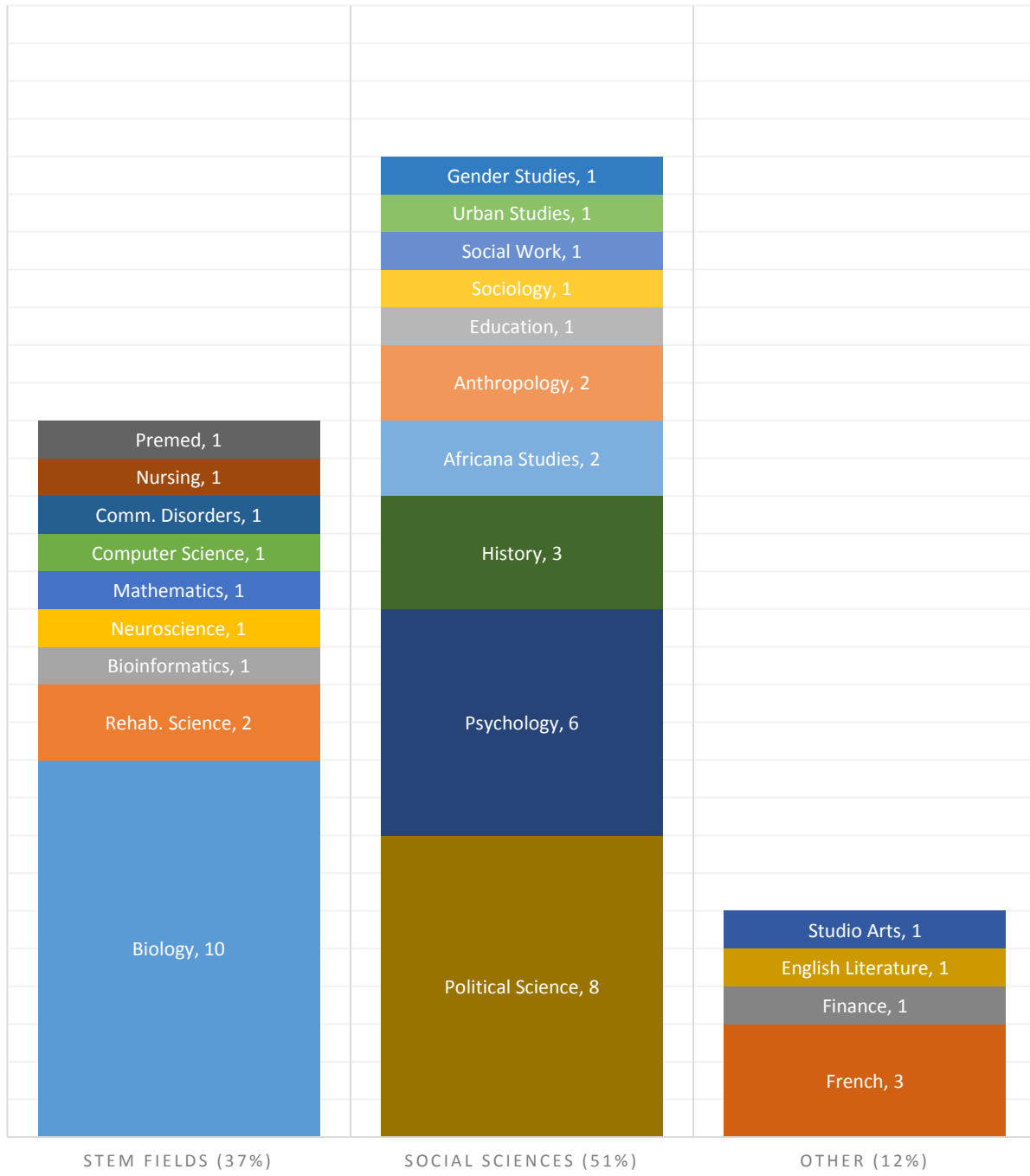
All respondents reported having studied abroad between the years of 2010-2015. A majority (95%) of participants reported that they went abroad during their undergraduate studies. Of those undergraduate students, 60% went abroad during a summer term while 40% went abroad during the academic year. The graduate students, both in their doctoral studies (n=2), did not otherwise specify which term they spent abroad. Participants reported having studied in 9 different African countries, with a majority (57%) studying in Tanzania. Currently, the University of Pittsburgh has 2 sponsored programs in Africa, one of which is in South Africa, the other of which is in Tanzania. The fact that a majority of students report having been to Tanzania is not surprising, as the Pitt in Tanzania program has been a strong program for the past several years.





**Figure 4.** Destination country of participants

## PARTICIPANTS' FIELDS OF STUDY



**Figure 5.** Participants' fields of study

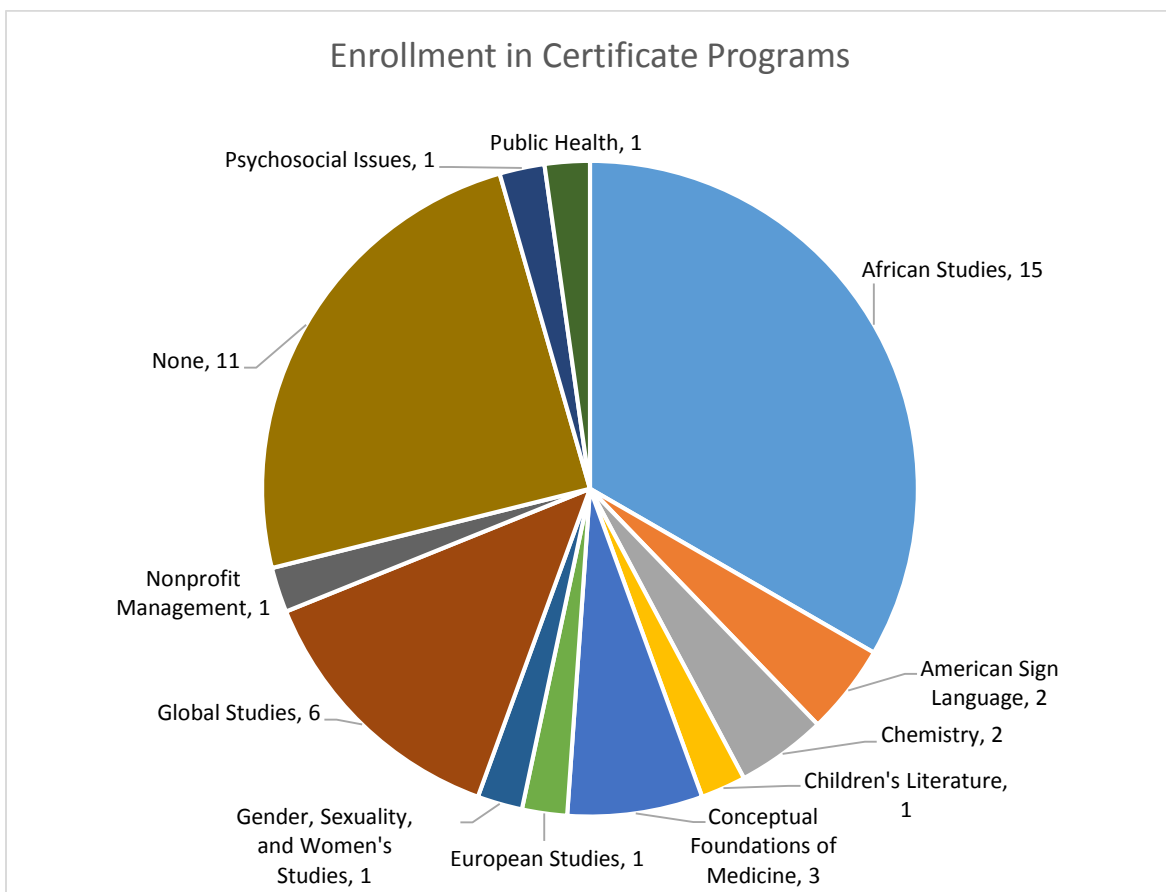
The most commonly reported fields of study among participants were biology (n=10), political science (n=8), and psychology (n=6). I divided the fields of study into 3 categories which included STEM fields, social sciences, and other fields. The social sciences were most widely represented (51%), followed by the STEM fields (37%), and other fields (12%). Almost a third (32%) of participants had listed more than one major as their field of study. The high representation of biology and STEM majors is likely related to the fact that the Pitt in Tanzania program has a strong focus on public health, and many participants reported the importance of academic and career goals in their destination decision.

When asked to briefly describe their career goals, participants most commonly mentioned that they aspire to careers in medicine, public health, or global health (n=16). Other common responses included development work (n=5), careers in psychology (n=4), working for the U.S. government (n=2), finances (n=2), and genetics (n=2). Again, the high representation of participants in the medical, public health, and global health field is likely due to the public health focus of the Pitt in Tanzania program.

**Table 4.** Self-reported career goals

Career Goals	Times Mentioned
Medicine, Global Health, Public Health	16
Development Work	5
Psychology	4
U.S. Government Work	2
Finances	2
Genetics	2
Veterinarian	1
Educational Policy	1
Speech Language Pathology	1
Not Sure	1

Most students (70%) were also enrolled in certificate programs, the most common of which was African Studies (41% of all participants). Many students (16% of all participants) were enrolled in Global Studies, an interdisciplinary certificate program at the University of Pittsburgh that focuses on cross-cultural learning of global issues such as global health, global security, global economy, and global society (Global Studies Center, 2015). Several participants (22% of all participants) were enrolled in more than one certificate program, the most common combination of which included African Studies and Global Studies (14% of all participants). One advantage of attending a large university is the availability of various certificate programs. Figure 6 below depicts participants' total enrollment in certificate programs.



**Figure 6.** Participants' certificate programs

Participants reported a mean grade point average of 3.54, with a standard deviation of 0.32. Kuncel, Credé, and Thomas (2005) note that it is important to use caution when including self-reported GPAs in research, as they are less valid than a verified measure of grading. In this study, however, my intention is not to correlate GPA with any other factor, but rather, I wanted to understand how participants in African study abroad programs might compare to the general population of college students. The data received suggests that those students who participated in the survey had a higher than average GPA compared to the overall population of college students. The College Board (2015) and The Princeton Review (n.d.), organizations concerned with college ranking and admissions procedures, report that a 3.54 GPA is equivalent to a 90% or an A average, or an A- depending on the scale used. The data above indicates that participants tend to rank as better than average students when compared to the general population. The University of Pittsburgh requires that all students wishing to study abroad must have a 2.75 GPA, or a 2.50 for engineering majors. Participants of this survey ranked well above the minimum requirement needed to study abroad.

Given their above average GPAs and the high rate of enrollment in certificate programs and double majors, participants of this survey appear to be academically focused. Similarly, the high representation of biology and STEM majors in this survey, likely a result of the academic focus of the Pitt in Tanzania program at the University of Pittsburgh, indicates that academic goals were an important motivating factor for many participants.

#### 4.1 IMPORTANT FACTORS IN DESTINATION CHOICE AS REPORTED BY PAST PARTICIPANTS

As I previously mentioned, I divided the motivating factors as found in the literature into four categories: Personal Factors, Outside Factors, Social Factors, and Financial Factors. I asked participants to rank the categories of factors based on how important they were to their study abroad destination decision. The composite ranking of these categories are as follows: Personal Factors (Mean Rank 1.24), followed by Outside Factors (Mean Rank 2.17), Financial Factors (Mean Rank 3.24), and finally Social Factors (Mean Rank 3.34). The table below shows the frequency of rankings, followed by the mean rank.

**Table 5.** Ranking of Factor Categories

Category	1	2	3	4	Mean Rank
Personal Factors (personal goals, desires, etc.)	22	7	0	0	1.24
Outside Factors (qualities about the country, program, etc.)	4	17	7	1	2.17
Financial Factors (program cost, scholarships, etc.)	3	3	7	16	3.24
Social Factors (personal connections in country, social support, recommendations, etc.)	0	2	15	12	3.34

### 4.1.1 Personal Factors

**Table 6.** Personal Factors ranked in order of importance

Personal Factors	Most Important	Least Important
Your desire for a unique experience	28	1
Your desire to experience a different culture	27	2
Your career goals	19	10
Your academic goals	16	13
Your desire to learn a new language	13	16

Table 6 above shows each factor from the Personal Factors category, and the number of times each factor was grouped as Most Important or Least Important. Participants were asked to choose whether each factor was Most Important or Least important to their destination decision, and then to rank the items in each group in order of importance. Almost all participants (97%) noted that the desire to have a unique experience was one of the most important factors in their decision to choose Africa as a study abroad destination. The desire to experience a different culture was also grouped as Most Important by 93% of participants. It is not surprising that these factors topped the list as the Most Important factors for students going abroad. When considering destination choices, these students sought out opportunities that were seen as unique, and ones that allowed them to experience a culture vastly different than their own.

Participants also grouped career goals (66%) and academic goals (55%) in the Most Important group, and nearly half of the participants (49%) stated that their desire to learn a new language was Most Important. Again, these results are not surprising, as we saw in the previous section that the participants in this survey were highly motivated academically.

In an open-ended question, participants were asked to briefly describe their motivations for choosing Africa as a study abroad destination. Figure 8 below highlights some of the most common themes represented by their answers. Three of the most common themes that emerged are listed under the Personal Factors category, further emphasizing that Personal Factors were the most important as student made their decision to study abroad in Africa. The most commonly mentioned motivation was the desire for a unique experience, followed by academic and career goals, and finally language acquisition.



**Figure 7.** Self-reported motivations for choosing Africa as a study abroad destination



#### **4.1.1.1 Unique Experience**

Given that 97% of students ranked the desire for a unique experience as one of the most important motivating factors for their destination choice, it is no surprise that when asked to briefly summarize their motivations for choosing to study in Africa, 43% of them stated that they wanted a unique experience. Some participants specifically mentioned that they wanted to go somewhere that none of their friends had gone. There were also several responses that were not coded under the Unique Experiences category, even though the participant specifically mentioned a unique aspect of an African destination (e.g. “unique wildlife”, “I took Swahili to add a fun/unique subject to my course load.”) This is an important finding as it shows that even taking other factors into account such as career goals and language goals, the desire to have a unique experience permeates into several factors of the decision-making process. Given this information, I would recommend that study abroad and African area studies professionals should promote their programs in Africa using specific wording of being a “unique destination” that allows students to gain experiences that many of their peers will never have.

Students also overwhelmingly reported that one of the Most Important factors in their destination choice was their desire to experience a new culture. I would suggest that most students who choose to study abroad, no matter their destination choice, are doing so because on some level they are interested in experiencing a new culture. It may be, however, that students who choose an African destination for their study abroad experience are seeking out a culture that is vastly different from their own. By understanding that this factor is one of the most important for students as they make their destination choices, we can use this specific language to market to and recruit students to African programs. In the open-ended response, one student stated that, “The significant emphasis that the Tanzania study abroad program placed on cultural immersion was most attractive

to me as well. I wanted to go somewhere where I could experience the culture rather than just sitting in a classroom studying a language for 3 months”. As study abroad and African area studies professionals, we may sometimes overlook the importance of emphasizing a meaningful cultural immersion for students that goes beyond the superficial, touristic cultural interactions and allows students to have continued contact and meaningful conversations with local people. Because we understand that experiencing a new culture is one of the fundamental traits of study abroad, we may sometimes fail to explicitly mention it to our students. Again, by using specific terms such as “cultural immersion” that students consider an important motivating factor in their decision-making process, we may be able to draw in more students to study within the African region. It is also important that we work to provide high quality programs that allow students to interact with the local culture, to learn from the locals, and take part in the lifestyle of the destination.

#### **4.1.1.2 Academic and Career Goals**

Another important finding of this survey is that students are very conscious of how their study abroad experience will fit in with their personal academic and career goals. Within the Personal Factors category, 66% of respondents reported their career goals and 55% reported their academic goals as being Most Important to their decision to study in Africa. When given the chance to open-endedly describe their motivations for choosing Africa as a destination, 30% of students specifically noted their academic and career goals.

The survey data shows us that 32% of participants had double majors, 70% were enrolled in certificate programs, and the average GPA of respondents was 3.54. These findings indicate that participants have high levels of academic and career motivation. It is no surprise that they considered academic and career goals to be Most Important to their decision to study in Africa.

In order to recruit other highly motivated students to study abroad in Africa, study abroad and African area studies professionals should consider creating programs that focus on a number of disciplines. This survey sample is highly career motivated, and many programs in the region focus on public health issues. While this program focus has drawn students from various, related disciplines to study in Africa, I believe that we can draw an even wider audience of students to the region by providing specialized programs in other fields such as education, business, or natural sciences. By promoting these programs in terms of their academic focus, and targeting promotion to students within specific schools, we may reach even more students who are highly motivated to gain experiences that will set them apart within their career fields.

#### **4.1.1.3 Language Acquisition**

According to Mazzarol and Soutar's (2002) definitions, I would classify language as both a push factor and a pull factor. A student wanting to study a foreign language may feel a push from their home country as they do not have ample opportunity to practice the target language at home. However, it can also be a pull factor in the sense that they might be drawn to a specific destination for the language specifically.

When asked to describe their motivation for studying in Africa, 16% of respondents mentioned that they wanted to study Swahili or French in a non-western setting. Three students also listed French as a major. While the majority of participants categorized the desire to learn a new language in the Least Important group, we cannot overlook the fact that there are still several students who seek out language learning opportunities in specific destinations. It may also be that many students sought a study abroad experience that allowed them to study academic courses in their mother tongue of English. With the Pitt in Tanzania program, the most widely represented

among participants, students had the opportunity to learn Swahili while also completing academic courses in English. This type of program may draw students in as they are able to study in their native tongue, and it may draw other students who wish to study a foreign language as well.

A country's spoken language can be considered a particular trait of the destination. For students seeking a language learning experience in a non-western, French-speaking country or for those who wish to learn Swahili, Yoruba, Portuguese, Arabic, or other less-commonly taught languages, the specific language trait of a country may be enough of a draw to study within Africa. Study abroad and African area studies professionals should continue promoting language learning in African countries by partnering with French departments on our campuses and by informing students of available scholarships for studying less-commonly taught languages such as Swahili, Yoruba, Portuguese, and Arabic.

#### 4.1.2 Outside Factors

**Table 7.** Outside Factors ranked in order of importance

Outside Factors	Most Important	Least Important
Academic focus of the study abroad program	24	5
Academic quality of the study abroad program	23	6
Lifestyle of your host country	23	6
Touristic opportunities available in your host country	17	12
Safety concerns within your host country	15	14
Image of your host country	12	17
Climate of your host country	9	20
Geographic distance between home and host country	9	20
Marketing materials about your program	6	23
Your desire to study in your mother tongue	5	24
Ease/difficulty of obtaining a visa	1	28

Table 7 above shows each factor from the Outside Factors category, and the number of times each factor was grouped into the Most Important and Least Important groups. Given my previous discussion of the importance of academic and career goals for participants, it is not surprising that the first two factors listed in this section are the academic focus and the academic quality of the study abroad program. Other important factors include the lifestyle and touristic opportunities of the destination country, and safety concerns within the host country.

It is important to note various factors that the participants grouped as Least Important as well. Almost all participants stated that visa considerations were Least Important. This particular

factor was mentioned in the literature as a possible pull factor for international students wishing to study in the U.S. (Macready & Tucker, 2011; Eder et al, 2010). The findings of this research suggest that visa considerations do not hold the same weight in the decision-making process of study abroad students as they do for international students coming to the U.S., likely because U.S. students who are going abroad often have guidance from study abroad professionals throughout the visa application process prior to departure.

Some of the more surprising findings were that marketing materials, and the image and climate of the destination country were considered to be Least Important. These findings are surprising as marketing materials are an important means of sharing information about possible study abroad destinations with students. The fact that students are less concerned about the image of the destination country is surprising, as 96% of participants reported on another survey item that they had a positive or very positive perception of their destination country both before they applied to their program and once they arrived to their destination. It may be that students do not consciously consider the images and perceptions that they have of a destination, although their subconscious opinions do play an important role in their decision-making process. It is understandable that students would choose to study abroad in a country that they perceive as having a positive image. Study abroad and African area studies professionals should work to promote positive images and stories from African countries through campus events and courses. As Metzler (2002) noted, the fear that the media evokes surrounding African issues can be a deterrent to students participating in African study abroad programs. By countering those negative images from the media with a more positive set of stories from Africa, students may be more likely to consider studying in an African country.

Participants were also asked to describe how familiar they were with their destination before they applied to the program, and how familiar they were with it once they had arrived in the country. Most respondents (70%) stated that they were unfamiliar with the destination before applying, but upon arriving in their destination, 83% reported that they were familiar or very familiar with the destination country, likely due to pre-departure orientations, pre-departure class material, and researching the destination on their own. Mazzarol & Soutar (2002) suggested that the more information an international student had about a destination, the more likely they would be to consider it as a destination. In the case of students who chose Africa as a study abroad destination, the opposite may be true. These students, having reported that a unique experience was one of the most important factors in their decision to choose Africa, may have sought out study abroad opportunities in destinations that were unknown to them for the simple fact that they were unknown. However, while preparing for their study abroad experience, students did report that they had become more familiar with the destination before arrival.

Geographic distance between a student's home and host country was also listed as a Least Important factor. It is possible that for U.S. study abroad students, geographic distance is less important than it is for international students coming to the U.S., as international students anticipate being abroad for a period of 4 years or more, while study abroad students only expect to be abroad for a period of a few weeks to a few months.

#### **4.1.2.1 Academic Focus and Quality of Study Abroad Program**

As mentioned in the Personal Factors section, participants of this survey were academically driven and career focused. Those personal characteristics were important factors in their decision-making process. It seems natural, then, that two of the Most Important factors that they would identify in

terms of Outside Factors would be the academic quality and the academic focus of the study abroad programs that they chose.

As I suggested in a previous section, professionals in the study abroad field should work on improving the variety of options that students have for studying abroad in Africa. Study abroad and African area studies professionals should work toward building a diverse range of study abroad programs that focus on a variety of different disciplines. Not only should we improve the diversity of offerings, but we must also be mindful of the academic quality of said programs. University sponsored study abroad programs may be the best option for destinations in Africa, as the courses will be tied directly to the students' institution, ensuring a certain university-approved level of quality, and a set of courses that are guaranteed to count for academic credit at the home institution. The academic infrastructure within African countries is not well known or understood by many, and therefore, an American institution that offers credits for studying in Africa may be more likely to draw students in.

#### **4.1.2.2 Lifestyle and Touristic Opportunities of Destination Country**

The lifestyle of the destination country and the touristic opportunities available within the destination country are also important factors for students while they are making their destination decision. Mazzarol & Soutar (2002) reported that lifestyle considerations were important for international students coming to the U.S., and these findings suggest that this factor is also important to U.S. students studying abroad as 83% of participants grouped the destination country's lifestyle as Most Important to their destination decision. When open-endedly reporting their motivations for studying in Africa, students commonly reported wanting a "unique" experience of a lifestyle and culture that was vastly different than their own.



Students not only consider lifestyle when choosing a destination, but 59% of participants reported that they also considered touristic opportunities available within the country. These findings offer support for Ntarangwi (2000) and Gertner's (2010) theories that study abroad destination choice is closely related to a touristic choice. The short term nature of many study abroad programs may lend itself to encouraging students to think about their study abroad experience as a form of tourism rather than a long term destination. Study abroad and African area studies professionals should promote touristic opportunities that are available through their programs. Adding attractive destinations and experiences to study abroad programs may draw in a wider pool of students. When asked to describe their motivations for studying in Africa, at least one student mentioned that they wanted to go there as part of a study abroad program because they would be less likely to travel there on their own. This suggests that travel support may be an important touristic consideration as well. Study abroad and African area studies professionals should also highlight the fact that there will be in-country support for students as they travel to these touristic sites. Particularly in the case of African study abroad programs, arranging for transportation, lodging, and meals could take some of the traveling anxieties away from students, and it can be difficult for students to navigate their own travel in many of these destinations.

While study abroad is primarily an academic activity, it is difficult to deny its similarity to tourism. Based on my own experience, I can attest that it is much more difficult to share the deep learning that is taking place through study abroad courses with friends and family compared to the ease of sharing touristic photos with them. Today's widespread use of social media makes it so easy for students to share photos and experiences while abroad, and students are often encouraged to do so by their friends and family. Even while the student is learning about and engaging with the local culture, they may simultaneously feel the need to share the touristic or superficial photos

with friends and family back home. Knowing their audience, many students may post the stereotypical photos that their families and friends might expect, even though this may serve as a reinforcement of those stereotypes. In my own experience as well, I found it much easier to share my photos from a safari experience than it was for me to begin any meaningful discussion about what it was that I was actually learning and doing during my time abroad. While tourism should be included and promoted as a means of increasing participation in study abroad programs in Africa, study abroad and African area studies professionals should have conversations with students during pre-departure orientation and throughout the program about the impact the students will have on their friends and family back home based on the photos they are sharing.

Many participants reported that they had traveled internationally before choosing to study abroad in Africa (87%). When asked about their previous travel experience, 17% of participants reported having traveled extensively to 10 or more countries, 20% reported having traveled to 5-10 countries, and 50% reported having visited 1-5 countries before studying abroad in Africa. A small percentage (13%) of participants were traveling for the first time on their way to Africa. These students were likely the same participants who reported that they received the Vira I. Heinz scholarship, which is specifically awarded to women who have never been outside of the United States. Only 10% of participants reported having studied abroad in another location prior to their decision to study in Africa, meaning that most of the travel that they had done prior to their decision to study abroad in Africa was done for the sake of tourism. The fact that most participants of this survey had previous travel experience offers support for Lane-Toomey and Lane's (2012) findings that those students who study in nontraditional destinations such as North Africa or the Middle East are typically better traveled and more internationally aware.

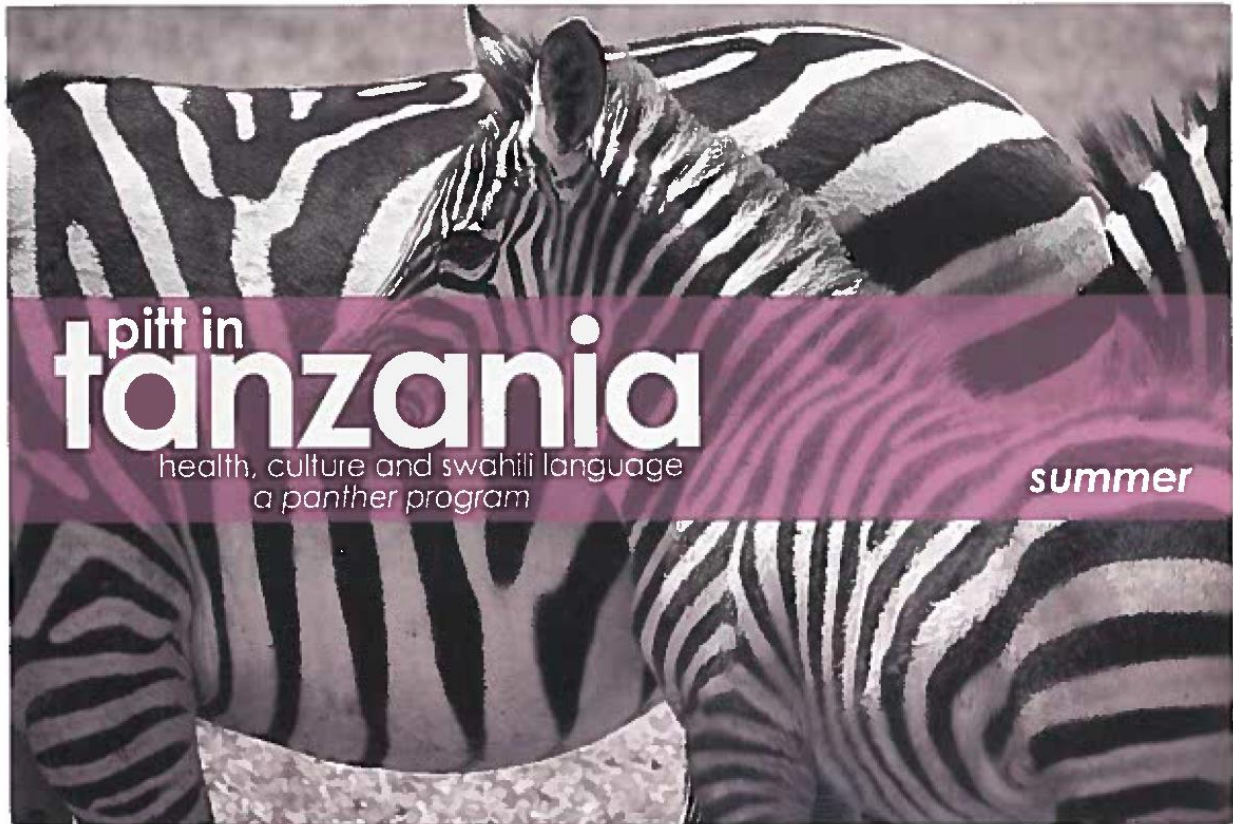
## Wildlife

(3 mentions)

- "I've always felt a pull toward Africa because I am in love with the wildlife there."
- "I had always wanted to go since I was a child, mostly for the wildlife."
- "I thought Africa would be a unique choice and would allow me to be outdoors and enjoy the wildlife."

**Figure 8.** Self-reported motivations for studying abroad in Africa

One of the surprising findings of the participants' open-ended responses regarding their motivation to study in Africa is that 3 participants wrote specifically about the wildlife drawing them to their destination. While interning with the African Studies Department, I had several conversations with other staff members about the frequently-used wildlife images in the marketing materials for African study abroad programs. For example, the promotional postcards used to promote the Pitt in Tanzania program for the 2015 year featured a single image of zebras (See Figure 9). The image is surely attractive, and it gives the impression of an exotic destination, but does it accurately portray the program, its goals, or its destination? The consensus from conversations with other African area studies professionals is that those wildlife images do not adequately capture what the study abroad experience in Africa will be like. Study abroad and African area studies professionals should carefully consider the images that they use when marketing for study abroad programs in Africa. While images of exotic wildlife may entice some students to study within the region, promotional materials should accurately reflect the study abroad program and the destination.



**Figure 9.** Promotional postcard for Pitt in Tanzania 2015 program

While wildlife may not be a leading pull factor for students to choose Africa as a study abroad destination, it is worth noting that a handful of students did make specific mention of it. As Ntarangwi (2000) suggests, students share similarities with tourists in the ways they interact with a culture while studying abroad. Wildlife safaris are one of the most recognizable touristic opportunities available in Africa, specifically in East Africa. While wildlife images on brochures may not depict an entirely accurate portrayal of the study abroad experience in Africa, the exotic images may draw some students to study within the region. While it is not necessary to remove all images of wildlife from marketing materials, professionals should be mindful of the expectations and impressions that these materials make on students.

#### **4.1.2.3 Safety Concerns within Destination Country**

Pires et al. (2000) and Metzler (2002) noted that study abroad in Africa comes with a unique set of challenges. Political instability, lack of infrastructure, and lack of adequate medical services can be discouraging factors for a student who is considering studying abroad in Africa. My survey asked respondents to list any hesitations they had regarding their choice to study abroad in Africa. The most common theme present in these answers was concern for safety and health (n=13). Others were concerned about being able to communicate in the host country's language (n=3), and being able to communicate with others back home (n=3). However, 37% of participants reported that they had no particular hesitations about studying in Africa, or that their hesitations were just normal travel anxieties. When grouping and ranking the Outside Factors, half of respondents said that safety concerns were Most Important as they made their destination decision. Hesitations regarding safety concerns may also be compounded with social factors as a student's friends and family may discourage them from choosing to study in Africa due to their own anxieties regarding the safety concerns mentioned above.

In order to better recruit students with these safety concerns to participate in study abroad programs in Africa, study abroad and African area studies professionals should emphasize to students that there will be staff on site in the host country to help them navigate unfamiliar territory and avoid unnecessary risk. Professionals should be realistic in the ways that they discuss the risks associated with studying abroad while simultaneously working to counter students' and parents' anxieties. Creating frequently asked questions pages that contain substantial information about the accommodations, services, and program setting for prospective students could also help to provide a general sense of security to students and parents who may be hesitantly considering studying abroad in Africa.

### 4.1.3 Financial Factors

**Table 8.** Financial Factors ranked in order of importance

Financial Factors	Most Important	Least Important
Cost of program tuition	24	5
Cost of flight to destination country	24	5
Cost of living in destination country	17	12
Availability of scholarships while abroad	11	18
Cost of visa process	3	26

When asked to rank the overall importance of the four categories of factors, over half of the participants ranked financial factors as being the least important of the categories. However, when ranked within the category, participants rated 3 specific financial factors as being Most Important to their decision to study in Africa.

Over half of the participants of this survey (57%) reported having received some form of scholarship to study abroad in Africa. It is important to note here that the financial factors may be underemphasized by this particular group as a result of the number of scholarships available at this particular institution. Nationality Room and other study abroad scholarships are available for students wishing to study abroad in a variety of world regions through the University Center of International Studies. Federally funded Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) scholarships are also available through the Global Studies Center. The Vira I. Heinz scholarship is a competitive scholarship available to women who have never traveled outside of the United States, and it even offers additional funding to participants who choose to study abroad in Africa and other

nontraditional study abroad destinations. The additional funding can be used for all tuition and travel costs. A large cohort of survey participants also received a Fulbright-Hays grant, due to the efforts of the sponsoring faculty, subsidizing almost half of the program cost for that group. Many participants reported having received outside scholarships as well. Participants reported their scholarships covered an average of 59% of program costs, although the standard deviation of 33.13, means that scholarship amounts varied greatly among participants.

When evaluating the importance of financial factors, students were most likely to report that the cost of the program tuition was Most Important to their decision to study in Africa. Other important considerations included the cost of the flight to the destination country and the cost of living within the destination country. Over half of the participants (55%) rated their programs as being affordable or very affordable, and 43% were neutral, stating that it was neither affordable nor unaffordable. Only one respondent rated their program cost as being unaffordable. However, it is important to note that these students were the ones who did study in Africa, and we do not have data from any students who were interested the program but decided not to go as a result of finances.

Offering scholarships to students can be a great way to incentivize them to choose Africa as a study abroad destination. Study abroad and African area studies professionals should stay abreast of possible funding opportunities for study abroad in Africa, and they should advertise and make students aware that there is often financial help available for such opportunities.

#### 4.1.4 Social Factors

**Table 9.** Social Factors ranked in order of importance

Social Factors	Most Important	Least Important
Family's opinion	24	5
Friends' opinion	17	12
Study abroad advisor's opinion	13	16
Faculty member's opinion	12	17
Classmate's opinion	4	25

Table 9 above shows each factor from the Social Factors category, and the number of times each factor was placed into the Most Important and Least Important groups. Among participants, 83% said that their family's opinion was Most Important, and 59% said that their friends' opinion was Most Important to their decision to study abroad in Africa. I believe that the most interesting finding from this section is the way the factors were divided between Most and Least Important. Students report that their study abroad destination decisions are much less influenced by a faculty member, study abroad advisor, or classmate's opinion. Perhaps unsurprisingly, these findings suggest that while academics are important, the study abroad decision-making process is influenced by one's personal life as well, and students are more likely to consider the opinions of relatives and friends over academic contacts.

Participants were also asked to rate the opinions that various people held regarding their decision to study in Africa. Participants reported that 62% of their families had positive or very positive reactions, and 59% of their friends had positive or very positive reactions to their decision to study in Africa. In terms of the academic setting, however, 69% reported that faculty members



had positive or very positive reactions, 66% of classmates had positive or very positive reactions, and 72% of study abroad advisors had positive or very positive reactions—a number that might seem low given their role in supporting students throughout the study abroad process. Though each of these categories of opinions were overall positive, families had the most varied reactions, with 24% of students reporting negative reactions from family. This may serve to confirm the “Family” factor of Metzler’s (2002) “Four F’s”, which stated that family members can often have negative views of a students’ decision to study abroad in Africa.

Despite the fact that study abroad advisors had a generally positive opinion of students’ decisions to study in Africa, over half of the respondents of this survey (62%) reported that nobody recommended Africa to them as a study abroad destination. For those who did receive recommendations, they most commonly came from faculty members (21%), friends (10%), study abroad advisors (10%), academic advisors (10%), or family members (7%). (Note: Participants were permitted to choose more than one option.)

Mazzarol & Soutar (2002) suggested that having social links within the destination country may be a pull factor for international students when choosing a study destination. Findings from my survey suggest that this may not be true of U.S. study abroad students who chose Africa as a destination. When asked whether or not they had any contacts in their destination country, 86% of respondents reported that they did not know anybody there. Similarly, 72% said did not know anybody who had traveled to their destination country prior to them deciding to study there. Perhaps though, the fact that they had limited social links to the country was a draw for them as they sought out a unique study abroad experience.

While my first reaction to this data would be to encourage faculty, academic, and study abroad advisors to be more proactive about specifically recommending African study abroad

destinations, it may also be the case that these students specifically chose to study in Africa due to the fact that nobody had recommended the destination to them. Still, there may be students who will never consider studying in Africa if they never receive encouragement from a trusted source. At least 38% of the participants of this survey did receive a recommendation to study in Africa. I would recommend that study abroad and African area studies professionals should be proactive about making faculty and academic advisors aware of the programs that are available within the region, highlighting the academic opportunities that students will have in the programs. Faculty, academic, and study abroad advisors, as well as African area studies professionals should be proactive about promoting the study abroad opportunities available within the region to students, emphasizing the unique experiences and cultural interactions that the student may gain from participating.

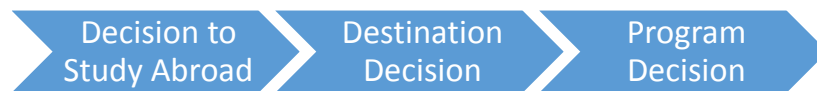
As students are heavily influenced by friends and family, we should also work to recruit students who have previously participated in African study abroad programs to share their experiences with other students, as students may be more receptive to recommendations from their friends and peers.

## **4.2 UNDERSTANDING THE SEQUENCE OF DECISION-MAKING IN THE STUDY ABROAD DESTINATION CHOICE**

I proposed a conceptual model for the study abroad decision-making process in Figure 3 of Section 2.4 of this paper. Based on the responses of participants, I feel confident that this model accurately describes the ways in which motivating factors contribute to a student's decision-making process. This model suggests that the primary decision in the decision-making sequence is most commonly

decision to study abroad. However, the second and third decisions may not follow the same sequence for all students. For this reason, I have represented the decisions in a way that allows for various sequences.

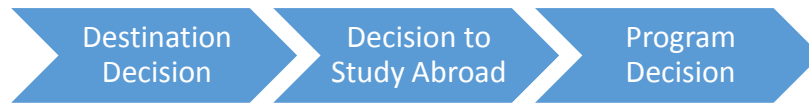
I asked participants to identify the sequence of their study abroad decision-making process. The predominant sequence identified by approximately 66% of participants was that they first decided to study abroad, then they chose a destination, and then they decided on a specific program. A student following this decision-making sequence would likely weigh push factors, decide that studying abroad would be a good choice for them, and would then research possible destinations and programs, considering the pull factors for each one. Study abroad and African area studies professionals should create marketing materials that emphasize the benefits of studying abroad in Africa as compared to other destinations. Language on these materials should include terms such as: “unique”, “different”, “opportunity”, “cultural immersion”, and similar terms to highlight the distinctiveness of these programs.



**Figure 10.** Predominant study abroad decision-making sequence

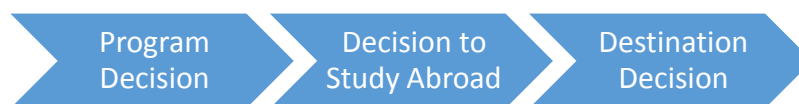
An alternative sequence, while less often reported, was true for 20% of the respondents of this survey. In this scenario, a student may feel a draw toward a specific destination, and they will then decide that studying abroad would be a good option for them, allowing them to spend time in their desired destination. They will then weigh options and pull factors as they choose an appropriate program. Study abroad and African area studies professionals should create marketing materials that emphasize the traits of the destinations of study abroad programs, highlighting

specific qualities of the region and individual country destinations to draw in students that are likely to make their decision based on the destination of the program.



**Figure 11.** Alternative decision-making sequence 1

Yet another possible sequence, which was true for approximately 13% of respondents, is that a student may choose to participate in a specific study abroad program, meaning that the choice to study abroad is only made once they decide to participate in that specific program. The destination is a default decision as it is already a feature of the program. Study abroad and African area studies professionals should create marketing materials that emphasize the programs features, specifying the academic focus, courses, and content of the program, including out-of-the-classroom activities, internships, or service opportunities available while abroad.



**Figure 12.** Alternative decision-making sequence 2

When asked whether they had considered other destinations as a possibility for studying abroad, 80% of participants said no. Those who did consider other destinations commented that they were considering other programs due to the academic focus of the programs. This evidence would suggest that there may be yet another possible sequence of decision-making. This sequence would occur when a student decides first to study abroad, and then looks at several different

program options in order to find the program with the best academic fit. Creating marketing materials geared toward the academic nature of the program would help to recruit students using this decision-making sequence as well.



**Figure 13.** Alternative decision-making sequence 3

It is important to note that there are various sequence possibilities in the study abroad decision-making process. Since the decision-making process is not linear, students will be influenced by push factors and pull factors at different times throughout their individual decision-making process. Pull factors toward a specific region may be the first stage of one student considering studying abroad, while another student might first be influenced by push factors to leave home with no specific destination in mind. While this study has highlighted several factors that students found to be Most Important in their decision-making, it is important to note that each individual student will bring their own needs, backgrounds, and considerations to the table when making their individual study abroad decisions. While it is important to look at trends and patterns, we should also be mindful of the outliers who can also contribute a great deal to our understanding of how students make their study abroad decisions.

## 5.0 CONCLUSION

Using Mazzarol and Soutar's (2002) push-pull model as a framework, I was able to identify several factors in the existing research that were found to be significant motivating factors in the study abroad destination choices of both U.S. students going abroad and international students wishing to study in the United States. The findings of my survey confirm the importance of many of the motivational pull factors for study abroad destination choice that were previously found in the literature, and it also offered several suggestions of where the motivations for destination choice might differ between international students coming to the U.S. and U.S. students going abroad. One of the contributions of this research is that it expands current understanding of motivations for study abroad destination choice, and it offers insight into the study abroad decision-making process.

Table 10 below summarizes the pull factors that participants of this survey ranked as being Most Important to their decision to choose Africa as a study abroad destination. The categories are listed in order of the composite rank that participants assigned to each category, and the factors mentioned within each category include only those factors that a majority of students grouped as being Most Important.

**Table 10.** Most Important pull factors within each category of factors

<p><b>Personal Factors</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Desire for a unique experience</li><li>•Desire to experience a different culture</li><li>•Career Goals</li><li>•Academic Goals</li></ul>
<p><b>Outside Factors</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Academic Focus of study abroad program</li><li>•Academic quality of study abroad program</li><li>•Lifestyle of host country</li><li>•Touristic opportunities available within host country</li><li>•Safety concerns within host country</li></ul>
<p><b>Financial Factors</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Cost of program tuition</li><li>•Cost of flight to destination country</li><li>•Cost of living in destination country</li></ul>
<p><b>Social Factors</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Family's opinion</li><li>•Friends' opinion</li></ul>

The findings of this survey suggest that the students who are choosing to study abroad in Sub-Saharan Africa are academically focused students who want to do something unique that will set them apart from their classmates and peers. While some students may be initially motivated by touristic opportunities, these students are seeking immersion in a culture that is vastly different from their own, and they desire to engage with local people and learn local languages while abroad.

We also see from this research that students do not follow a linear pattern for making their study abroad decisions. While some students may be open to various destinations and program options, other students may be motivated to study abroad by finding a program that fits well with

their academic goals and interests. By marketing programs in a way that appreciates these varying decision-making sequences, we may be able to draw more students in to our programs.

When participants were asked at the end of the survey to offer any additional comments regarding their study abroad experience in Africa, 76% stated that it was one of the best experiences of their life. Knowing that students are having overwhelmingly positive, albeit challenging, experiences offers yet another reason that study abroad opportunities in Sub-Saharan Africa are worth pursuing and promoting among university students.

## **5.1 FUTURE RESEARCH**

While doing my initial research regarding significant factors for destination choice, it did not initially occur to me that the desire to do service or development work might be a significant motivation to study in Africa in particular. None of the items on my survey touched substantially on the issue of service or development, although in some of the open-ended responses, students did mention a desire to work in development or to complete volunteer or service projects in Africa. One participant noted that, “I have been to Africa multiple times before on volunteer trips and am hoping to continue doing research in Africa in my future.” Another stated that they would “love to return to East Africa to work, train, or volunteer in my field”. Future researchers may wish to take into account that many Americans who travel to Africa do so with the intention of completing a service or missions project, or to volunteer for an NGO doing development work. During my own study abroad experience in Tanzania, many students within my group shared numerous photos with friends and family that featured a short weekend-long service opportunity, although they shared less photos of the typical day-to-day routines. This seems to suggest that students over-



share service experiences and that family and friends expect to see these types of activities while students are abroad in Sub-Saharan Africa. While my research does not explicitly ask participants about their motivation to choose Sub-Saharan Africa as a study abroad destination based on their desire to do service abroad, I would recommend that study abroad and African area studies professionals should include service-learning, volunteer, or development projects into their program designs. Adding these opportunities may encourage some students to participate in study abroad programs within the region.

## **5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR STUDY ABROAD AND AFRICAN AREA STUDIES PROFESSIONALS**

Throughout the Results and Discussion section of this paper, I have made several recommendations for study abroad and African area studies professionals in order to increase the number of students who are enrolling in African study abroad programs. I will restate and consolidate those recommendations in this section.

- We should work to promote positive images and stories from African countries through campus events and courses. As Metzler (2002) noted, the fear that the media evokes surrounding African issues can be a deterrent to students participating in African study abroad programs. By countering those negative images from the media with a more positive set of stories from Africa, students may be more likely to consider studying in an African country. Offering special events and courses on campus that focus on the strengths of the African region may encourage students to learn more about the region and consider studying abroad.

- We should stay abreast of possible funding opportunities for study abroad in Africa and advertise to make students aware that there is often financial help available for such opportunities. We should emphasize scholarship programs such as the Foreign Language and Area Studies Scholarship, the Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship, the Vira I. Heinz Scholarship, and others that give preference to students wishing to study abroad in nontraditional destinations.
- We should create marketing materials that emphasize the benefits of studying abroad in Africa compared to other destinations. The language used on these materials should include terms such as: “unique”, “different”, “opportunity”, “cultural immersion”, and similar terms to highlight the distinctiveness of these programs. By using specific terms such as “cultural immersion”, a term that students consider an important motivating factor in their decision-making process, we may be able to draw in more students to study within the African region. We should carefully consider the images that we use when marketing for study abroad programs in Africa. While images of exotic wildlife may entice some students to study within the region, promotional materials should accurately reflect the study abroad program and the destination. We should create marketing materials that emphasize the program’s features, specifying the academic focus, courses, and content of the program, including out-of-the-classroom activities, internships, or service opportunities available while abroad.
- As students are heavily influenced by friends and family, we should also work to recruit students who have previously participated in African study abroad programs to share their experiences with other students, as students may be more receptive to recommendations from their friends and peers. We should also involve parents in information sessions and

provide resources to parents, possibly connecting them with parents of past participants. In order to better recruit students who have safety concerns to participate in study abroad programs in Africa, we should emphasize to students that there will be staff on site in the host country to help them navigate unfamiliar territory and avoid unnecessary risk. We should be realistic in the ways that we discuss the risks associated with studying abroad while simultaneously working to counter students' and parents' anxieties. Creating frequently asked questions pages that contain substantial information about the accommodations, services, and program setting for prospective students could also help to provide a general sense of security to students and parents who may be hesitantly considering studying abroad in Africa.

- We should work toward building a diverse range of study abroad programs that focus on a variety of different disciplines. Not only should we improve the diversity of offerings, but we must also be mindful of the academic quality of said programs. We must provide high quality programs that allow students to interact with the local culture, learn from the locals, and take part in the lifestyle of the destination. By promoting these programs in terms of their academic focus, and targeting promotion to students within specific schools, we may reach even more students who are highly motivated to seek out experiences that will set them apart within their career fields. We should be proactive about making faculty and academic advisors aware of the programs that are available within the region, highlighting the academic opportunities that students will have in the programs. Faculty, academic and study abroad advisors, as well as African area studies professionals should be proactive about promoting the study abroad opportunities available within the region to students,

emphasizing the unique experiences and cultural interactions that the student may gain from participating.

- We should continue promoting language learning in African countries by partnering with French departments on our campuses and by informing students of available scholarships for studying less-commonly taught languages such as Swahili, Yoruba, Portuguese, and Arabic.
- We should promote touristic opportunities that are available through these study abroad programs. Adding attractive destinations and experiences to study abroad programs may draw in a wider variety of students. We should also highlight the fact that there will be in-country support for students as they travel to these touristic sites. While tourism should be included and promoted as a means of increasing participation in study abroad programs in Africa, we should have conversations with students during pre-departure orientation and throughout the program about the impact the students will have on their friends and family back home based on the photos they are sharing.
- We should include service-learning, volunteer, or development projects into their program designs. Adding these opportunities may encourage some students to participate in study abroad programs within the region.

Based on the findings of my research, I believe that above recommendations are appropriate and necessary for increasing the number of students who study abroad in Africa. By incorporating these recommendations into our recruitment and management practices for study abroad programs in Africa, we may be able to significantly increase the number of students who enroll in these programs.

**Table 11.** Recommendations for study abroad and African area studies professionals

Promote positive stories about Africa on campus.

- Work to improve the image of Africa as portrayed by the mainstream media, challenging commonly held stereotypes of the region.
- Offer special events and courses that focus on the strengths of the African region.

Offer scholarships for study abroad to students who are interested in African studies.

- Stay abreast of possible funding opportunities for study abroad in Africa.
- Advertise and promote funding opportunities to students.

Create marketing materials that appeal to students' desire to do something "unique" and different.

- Promote that idea that students who have an experience in Africa will stand out from the crowd.
- Emphasize the opportunities for cultural immersion when discussing programs with students.
- Use images for marketing materials that appropriately represent the program, but that also provide a sense of being exotic.

Encourage family participation in study abroad decision-making.

- Recruit parents of past students to talk with parents of prospective students.
- Make information packets for parents containing program details, safety information, etc.
- Host information sessions to share details about the program, and allow students and their parents to attend to ask questions.

Create more programs in Africa that focus on a variety of different disciplines.

- Partner with various departments on campus to develop university-sponsored programs to ensure academic quality.
- Target the promotion of study abroad programs to the schools and departments most closely related to the academic content of the program.
- Make faculty and advisors aware of the programs and their academic content, emphasizing the ways that participating would set a student apart from their peers.

Promote study abroad in Africa to students of French, Swahili, Arabic, Portuguese, and other less-commonly taught languages.

- Partner with language departments on campus to offer short term study abroad opportunities.
- Promote the study of less commonly taught languages, and emphasize the scholarships offered by the US Government.

Incorporate service/volunteering into the programs.

- Use service-learning pedagogy as a way to help students reflect on their experience.
- Give students an opportunity to have meaningful interactions with the local culture.

Incorporate attractive touristic excursions into study abroad programs.

- Make students aware of the travel support that will be offered in the destination country.
- Create a page of FAQ to answer student questions about travel and accommodations.
- Have discussions with students about the photos they will be sharing with friends and family and how their photos will impact others' view of Africa.

## APPENDIX A: NOTICE OF IRB EXEMPT STATUS



### University of Pittsburgh Institutional Review Board

3500 Fifth Avenue  
Pittsburgh, PA 15213  
(412) 383-1480  
(412) 383-1508 (fax)  
<http://www.irb.pitt.edu>

#### Memorandum

To: Rachael English  
From: IRB Office  
Date: 4/8/2015  
IRB#: [PRO15020094](#)  
Subject: Study Abroad in Africa: Understanding Student Motivation in Order to Increase Enrollment

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The above-referenced project has been reviewed by the Institutional Review Board. Based on the information provided, this project meets all the necessary criteria for an exemption, and is hereby designated as "exempt" under section 45 CFR 46.101(b)(2)

Please note the following information:

- Investigators should consult with the IRB whenever questions arise about whether planned changes to an exempt study might alter the exempt status. Use the "Send Comments to IRB Staff" link displayed on study workspace to request a review to ensure it continues to meet the exempt category.
- It is important to close your study when finished by using the "Study Completed" link displayed on the study workspace.
- Exempt studies will be archived after 3 years unless you choose to extend the study. If your study is archived, you can continue conducting research activities as the IRB has made the determination that your project met one of the required exempt categories. The only caveat is that no changes can be made to the application. If a change is needed, you will need to submit a NEW Exempt application.

Please be advised that your research study may be audited periodically by the University of Pittsburgh Research Conduct and Compliance Office.

**Figure 14.** Notice of IRB Exempt Status

## **APPENDIX B: PARTICIPANT RECRUITMENT AND CONSENT SCRIPT**

Dear Students,

The African Studies Program is conducting a research study investigating which factors motivate students to choose Africa as their study abroad destination. You have been invited to participate in this study because you have previously completed a study abroad program in Africa through the University of Pittsburgh. The Study Abroad Office has provided the names of those students who have studied abroad in Africa. The purpose of this research study is to better understand how students choose their study abroad destination, particularly in the case of those who choose non-traditional locations such as Africa. The results of this study will be used as we consider ways to increase enrollment in African study abroad programs in the future. Our graduate student intern, Rachael English, will also be using data generated by this survey as she completes her master's thesis.

You must be 18 years or older to participate in this research study. If you agree to take part in this research study, you can click on the link at the end of this email. You will be asked questions about your background (academic progress, travel experience, gender, race, etc.), and you will be asked to determine which factors were important to you in your study abroad decision-making process. It will take you approximately 5-10 minutes to complete the survey.

As a token of our appreciation, we would like to offer a \$10 Amazon gift card to the first ten students who complete the survey. The remaining participants will be entered into a drawing to

win one of five remaining \$10 gift cards. There are no foreseeable risks for participating in this study, and there are no direct benefits to you. This is an anonymous questionnaire, and your responses are confidential. After you complete the survey, you will be redirected to another, unlinked survey where you can enter your information for the drawing. Your responses will not be attached to your name or information. Your decision to take part in this research study is entirely voluntary, and you may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. If you have any questions about the research now or at any time during the study, please contact the African Studies Program at 412-648-1802 or by email at africanstudies@pitt.edu. You may also contact Rachael English at 412-867-8947 or by email at rae39@pitt.edu. We greatly value your perspective, and we would love to hear from you.

Thank you for your time and participation.



**Click Here to Take Our Survey**

African Studies Program



## APPENDIX C: QUALTRICS SURVEY INSTRUMENT

1 Have you studied abroad in Africa?

- Yes
- No

2 In which country did you study abroad?

3 At what point in your academic career did you study abroad in Africa?

- Freshman year
- Summer between Freshman and Sophomore year
- Sophomore year
- Summer between Sophomore and Junior year
- Junior year
- Summer between Junior and Senior year
- Senior year
- During Masters Studies
- During Doctoral Studies
- During Professional Graduate Studies
- Other

4 In which year did you study abroad in Africa?

5 What is your major or field of study? (List all, if more than one)

6 Are you enrolled in any certificate programs? (List all, if more than one)

7 Please briefly describe your career goals:

8 What is your GPA?

9 Did any of the following people recommend Africa to you as a study abroad destination? (Select all that apply)

- Nobody recommended Africa as a study abroad destination
- Friend
- Family member
- Academic Advisor
- Study Abroad Advisor
- Faculty Member
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

10 Briefly describe your motivation for choosing Africa as your study abroad destination.

11 Drag the following items to determine whether each factor was Most Important or Least Important to you as you made your decision to study abroad in Africa. Then rank the items within each group based on their level of importance, placing the most important items in each category at the top of the list.

Most Important	Least Important
_____ Your Academic Goals	_____ Your Academic Goals
_____ Your Career Goals	_____ Your Career Goals
_____ Your Desire for a Unique Experience	_____ Your Desire for a Unique Experience
_____ Your Desire to Learn a New Language	_____ Your Desire to Learn a New Language
_____ Your Desire to Experience a Different Culture	_____ Your Desire to Experience a Different Culture

12 Drag the following items to determine whether each factor was Most Important or Least Important to you as you made your decision to study abroad in Africa. Then rank the items within each group based on their level of importance, placing the most important items in each category at the top of the list.

Most Important	Least Important
_____ Academic Quality of the Study Abroad Program	_____ Academic Quality of the Study Abroad Program
_____ Academic Focus of the Study Abroad Program	_____ Academic Focus of the Study Abroad Program
_____ Your Desire to Study in Your Mother Language	_____ Your Desire to Study in Your Mother Language
_____ Touristic Opportunities Available in Host Country	_____ Touristic Opportunities Available in Host Country
_____ The Lifestyle of Your Host Country	_____ The Lifestyle of Your Host Country
_____ The Climate of Your Host Country	_____ The Climate of Your Host Country
_____ Safety Concerns within Your Host Country	_____ Safety Concerns within Your Host Country
_____ The Geographic Distance Between Your Home Country and Host Country	_____ The Geographic Distance Between Your Home Country and Host Country
_____ Marketing Materials about your Program	_____ Marketing Materials about your Program
_____ The Image of your Host Country	_____ The Image of your Host Country
_____ Ease/Difficulty of Obtaining a Visa	_____ Ease/Difficulty of Obtaining a Visa

13 How many countries had you visited prior to your study abroad experience in Africa? (Not including your home country)

- 0
- 1-3 Countries
- 3-5 Countries
- 5-10 Countries
- 10-15 Countries
- 15+ Countries

14 Had you completed any other study abroad programs (for academic credit) prior to applying to your program in Africa?

- Yes
- No

15 When applying for your study abroad program in Africa, did you consider applying to study abroad programs in any other location?

- No
- If Yes, Please Explain: \_\_\_\_\_

16 Please drag the following items into the order that best represents the sequence of your study abroad decision making.

- \_\_\_\_\_ Your Decision to Study Abroad
- \_\_\_\_\_ Your Decision to go to Africa
- \_\_\_\_\_ Your Decision to Attend your Specific Study Abroad Program

17 How familiar were you with your destination country at the following points in time?

	Very Unfamiliar	Unfamiliar	Familiar	Very Familiar
Prior to Application	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Upon Arrival to Host Country	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

18 Please rate your perception of your destination country at the following points in time:

	Very Negative	Negative	Positive	Very Positive
Prior to Application	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Upon Arrival to Host Country	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

19 Please rate the following peoples' reactions to your decision to study in Africa:

	Very Negative	Negative	Neither Negative nor Positive	Positive	Very Positive	Not Applicable
Family	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Friends	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Faculty	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Classmates	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Study Abroad Advisor	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

20 Drag the following items to determine whether each factor was Most Important or Least Important to you as you made your decision to study abroad in Africa. Then rank the items within each group based on their level of importance, placing the most important items in each category at the top of the list.

Most Important	Least Important
_____ Family's Opinion	_____ Family's Opinion
_____ Friends' Opinion	_____ Friends' Opinion
_____ Faculty Member's Opinion	_____ Faculty Member's Opinion
_____ Classmates' Opinion	_____ Classmates' Opinion
_____ Study Abroad Advisor's Opinion	_____ Study Abroad Advisor's Opinion

21 Please list any hesitations that you had regarding your choice to study abroad in Africa.

22 How would you rate the affordability of your program in Africa?

- Very Affordable
- Affordable
- Neither Affordable nor Unaffordable
- Unaffordable
- Very Unaffordable

23 Did you receive any grants or scholarships for studying abroad in Africa?

- No
- If Yes, Please Explain: \_\_\_\_\_

24 If you received a scholarship, what percentage of the cost did your scholarship cover?

\_\_\_\_\_ Percentage of Cost Covered

25 Drag the following items to determine whether each factor was Most Important or Least Important to you as you made your decision to study abroad in Africa. Then rank the items within each group based on their level of importance, placing the most important items in each category at the top of the list.

Most Important	Least Important
_____ Cost of Program Tuition	_____ Cost of Program Tuition
_____ Cost of Flight to Destination Country	_____ Cost of Flight to Destination Country
_____ Cost of Living in Destination Country	_____ Cost of Living in Destination Country
_____ Availability of Scholarships while Abroad	_____ Availability of Scholarships while Abroad
_____ Cost of Visa Process	_____ Cost of Visa Process
_____ Financial Concerns at Home	_____ Financial Concerns at Home

26 Did you have any social contacts in your destination country prior to applying for your study abroad program?

- No
- If Yes, Please Explain: \_\_\_\_\_

27 Did you know anybody who had traveled to your destination country prior to applying for your program?

- No
- If Yes, Please Explain \_\_\_\_\_

28 Please drag the following items to rank which type of factors were most important in your decision to study in Africa, placing the most important item at the top.

- \_\_\_\_\_ Personal Factors (personal goals, desires, etc.)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Outside Factors (qualities about the country, program, etc.)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Social Factors (personal connections in country, social support, recommendations, etc.)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Financial Factors (program cost, scholarships, etc.)

29 Please tell us what else you would like to share about your study abroad experience in Africa.

30 Please select your gender.

- Male
- Female
- Prefer not to answer

31 Please select your race. (Select all that apply)

- White/Caucasian
- African American
- African
- Hispanic
- Asian
- Native American
- Pacific Islander
- Other
- Prefer not to answer

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