

**The Experiential Tourism Decision-Making Process of Studying Abroad: A Case Study of
Canadian University Students in British Columbia**

TMGT 4020: Graduating Seminar

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Introduction

Study abroad has become an important part of university education because it is associated with cultural learning, global awareness, and personal and professional development for students (Gan & Kang 2022; Hung & Yen, 2020). Studying abroad is not only an academic experience, but also a strong tourism influence integrated into the experience. Students often travel within their host country or to nearby destinations during their exchange, making tourism a meaningful part of the overall experience (Michael et al., 2003; Ellis et al, 2017). These tourism activities may include sightseeing, visiting cultural and historical attractions, and taking short trips that become some of the most memorable parts of studying abroad. Tourism experiences can also become more meaningful when students actively engage with local culture and develop intercultural understanding, responsibility, appreciation, and action (Fan et al., 2021). Understanding how students' expectations and planned travel experiences compare with their actual experiences can provide valuable insights into consumer decision-making in tourism contexts.

Research Question

The main research question is "How does planned tourism-related consumer behaviour among study abroad students change before, during, and after study abroad?" Existing research has examined student mobility and travel motivations; however, fewer studies explore how tourism behaviour changes in study abroad experiences.

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to explore how tourism-related consumer behaviour among study abroad students changes across different stages of the study abroad experience. The research focuses on three phases of before departure, during the study abroad, and after returning home. Focusing on Canadian university students in British Columbia who have completed a study abroad program, this research examines how students plan their tourism before departure, how those plans change while abroad, and how the experiences from studying abroad influence their future travel planning. The findings may provide insights into how students' expectations and planning, lived experiences, and reflections shape tourism-related consumer behaviour.

Significance

The significance of this research is to contribute to both academic knowledge and practice related to tourism and study abroad. From an academic perspective, the study aims to help understand how tourism-related changes within international education. From a practical viewpoint, the findings may provide insights for university study abroad programs. This research could help structure study abroad programs by better understanding students' approaches to tourism. Additionally, it could help institutions design better orientation sessions, improve their travel resources, and support students in their travel decisions while abroad. Furthermore, the research may also provide useful insights for future students considering study abroad programs. By understanding how tourism behaviour commonly changes abroad, students may be able to prepare better travel opportunities and manage expectations before departing.

Literature Review

Study abroad programs have expanded significantly as universities emphasize global education and intercultural learning. These programs are designed to promote cultural

understanding and global competence among students (Gan & Kang, 2022). Research suggests that studying abroad can improve cultural awareness, global perspectives, and professional skills to enhance employability and career opportunities (Hung & Yen, 2020). These benefits can help prepare students to participate in a globalized workforce. However, most of the research focuses on educational and personal development after study abroad rather than examining tourism-related behaviours.

Consumer Decision-Making

The consumer decision-making process provides a useful theoretical framework for this study because it treats behaviour as something that develops through stages rather than as a single choice (Stankevich, 2017). The framework includes the need for recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, decision, and post-experience reflection (Stankevich, 2017). This is especially relevant to study abroad because students begin with expectations and intentions before departure, continue making tourism decisions while abroad, and later reflect on those decisions after returning home. Research on international students also supports the importance of decision-making as a process. Students studying abroad are influenced by motivations, information sources, and decision factors such as academic reputation and quality (Oliveira & Soares, 2016). This suggests that study abroad decisions are shaped before departure.

Motivations in the Pre-Departure Phase

Within this decision-making framework, motivations are especially relevant in the pre-departure phase. Students are motivated by a combination of cultural exploration, academic interests, personal growth, travel opportunities and career development (Gan & Kang 2022; Petra, 2020; Hung & Yen, 2020). These motivations help explain why students initially choose

to study abroad and why tourism may already be imagined as part of the experience before leaving. Students evaluate destination characteristics, perceived benefits, and personal goals when deciding where to go (Oliveira & Soares, 2016). Furthermore, behavioural intention research indicates that individuals' attitudes and intentions influence their engagement with study abroad or travel activities (Jaegar & Gram; Spindler, 2017; Streitwieser & Light, 2017). These studies highlight how motivation and decision-making processes influence participation in study abroad programs.

Tourism Experiences and Intercultural Engagement

Once students arrive abroad, they no longer base their decision only on expectations but are influenced by their lived experiences. Students frequently travel during study abroad, which confirms that tourism is an important part of the experience (Michael et al., 2003). However, expectations are not always met as students may encounter cultural challenges or unexpected situations during their time abroad (Nilsson, 2013). These experiences may influence students' perceptions of destinations and their future travel behaviour. Research also highlights the role of intercultural competence in shaping meaningful travel experiences. Intercultural competence refers to being able to effectively interact with individuals from different cultures and backgrounds, which can create a more meaningful tourism experience (Fan et al., 2021). Additionally, active participation and engagement can enhance visitor satisfaction and perceived value (Ellis et al., 2017; Fan et al., 2021). Understanding expectations and experiences can provide insights into how study abroad experiences shape consumer behaviour

Research Gap

There are several gaps that remain in the literature focused on study abroad and tourism behaviour. Some studies focus mainly on motivations for studying abroad and the factors that

influence destination choice (Oliveira & Soares, 2016; Petra 2020; Hung & Yen, 2020). Other studies examine travel behaviour or tourism participation during the study abroad period (Michael et al., 2003; Ellis et al., 2017). Studies also focus on expectations, intercultural learning, or the meanings students make of international experience after returning (Nilsson, 2013; Streitwieser & Light, 2017). There is a gap where expectations, experiences, and reflection connect throughout the entire study abroad process. Additionally, there is little data on the gap between planned tourism activities (pre-booked or trips students say they will take) and actual tourism consumption while abroad. Lastly, there is a lack of research on how students reshape their future travel plans once returned from their study abroad. This study will use the consumer decision-making framework to compare pre-study abroad, during, and post-study abroad to address these gaps.

Methodology

This study will use a qualitative exploratory research design to examine how tourism-related consumer behaviour changes during the study abroad experience. The study is informed by a social constructivist worldview. This assumes that individuals want to understand the world they live in and develop subjective meaning based on their personal experiences (Creswell, 2009). A qualitative approach is used as it allows participants to describe their personal experiences and reflections in full detail (Creswell, 2009). The research design explores the behavioural changes of students across their pre-departure, during study abroad, and post-study abroad phases following the Consumer Decision-Making Process framework. Using the CDM framework will allow the study to look into how tourism-related decisions change over the three phases.

Data Collection

Data was collected through semi-structured retrospective interviews. This method allowed the interviewer to guide the conversation while still giving participants room to elaborate on their experiences (Patton, 2002). The interview questions covered background information, pre-departure expectations and planning, behaviour during study abroad, and reflections after returning home (see Appendix A). Participants were recruited through voluntary participation and email invitations. Participants completed a consent form before participation, which outlined the participants' rights, confidentiality, and the voluntary nature of participation (see Appendix B). Interviews ranged from 20 to 60 minutes and was audio-recorded on a Microsoft Teams account with participant consent.

Data Analysis

The interview data were analyzed using thematic analysis. The analysis process reviewed the transcribed interviews to identify patterns and themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The analysis used a deductive, theory-informed approach with coding guided by the CDM process and by the three phases of the study. Transcripts were imported into NVivo, where they were coded for recurring ideas related to motivation, planning, information sources, constraints, adaptation, travel competence, social influence, and post-return reflection. NVivo supported the organization of transcripts, the systematic application of codes, and the refinement of themes.

Research Findings

Participant Profile

The final sample consisted of 10 Canadian students who had studied at universities in British Columbia and had completed a study abroad experience. Participants came from

institutions including Thompson Rivers University, the University of British Columbia, the University of British Columbia Okanagan, and Capilano University. They completed study abroad programs in a range of destinations, including Australia, England, Austria, Germany, the Netherlands, Italy, and Japan. Participants' stays ranged from approximately four to ten months, with some extending their time abroad to travel after their program. Prior travel experience varied; however, all participants described study abroad as their first solo international trip.

Overview

The findings showed that planned tourism-related consumer behaviour did not remain constant across the study abroad experience. Instead, there was a shift in a clear pattern. Before departure, behaviour was largely aspirational and expectation-based. During study abroad, behaviour became more adaptive, and after the experience, the student's behaviour became more reflective and intentional towards future travel. These shifts were shaped by prior travel experience, destination choice, financial limitations, transport systems, social influence and their lived experience.

Finding 1: Tourism as an aspirational motivator

Across participants, tourism was a major reason students wanted to study abroad. Travel was not treated as an added benefit to the academic experience; for many participants, it was central to how they imagined the value of going abroad. This pattern was evident among participants with limited prior solo travel experience. Several participants described tourism as a core motivation. P4 answered "100%" for travel being the reason for choosing the experience to study abroad. P7 similarly said that "travelling was probably the main priority" before departure, and that the plan had been to "go somewhere every weekend." P10 said tourism was "very important" and explained that the appeal of the destination was tied to its fashion, food, culture,

and central location. P6 also emphasized that they had “always just liked traveling” and saw study abroad as a way to have “a base somewhere and then go places from there.” This shows that tourism was built into how P6 understood the purpose of the experience. These comments indicated that the pre-departure stage aligned with the problem recognition phase of the CDM process. Students recognized not only the opportunity to study abroad, but also a strong desire for tourism, mobility, and cultural experience.

Finding 2: Pre-departure planning

Planning before departure varied across participants. Some students planned specific trips in detail, while others tried to keep plans loose and expected to decide once abroad. This variation seemed related to prior travel experience, destination choice, and personality. However, across the sample, planning was strongly influenced by destination image, social media, and peers. P7 described a highly structured planning approach, saying her early trips were “super detailed,” with flights and accommodation already arranged. In contrast, P8 described a much looser approach, saying, “I really didn’t have like much in mind when I was going on what I would do. I was kind of just like, oh, I’ll just decide when I get there.” P3 also emphasized flexibility, noting that there was “no real plan set in place” and that they often would “just [wake] up and do what they wanted to do that day.” Several participants also showed how image and social media mattered at this stage. P5 said they had “very strict things I wanted to see” in Europe, while P8 admitted many of her early ideas came from things that “looked cool” online rather than from realistic planning. This supports the CDM stages of information search and shows that the information was often experiential, social, and image-based rather than practical.

Finding 3: Adaptive behaviour during study abroad

The strongest finding was that participants' tourism behaviour changed significantly once they were abroad. In all interviews, students found that their original plans did not fully match the realities of time, distance, budget, academic responsibilities, transport, and energy levels. P7 offered one of the clearest examples of this shift. Although they had planned to travel every weekend, P7 explained that it became exhausting and that they needed time off because it was "taking a toll." They further explained how they were not seeing their host country itself as much as they wanted and started travelling more locally. P8 also described a shift in their priorities after arriving. They noted that many of the destinations they had imagined going to before leaving no longer made practical sense, and that "cheap flights" became a stronger influence.

For participants in Australia, geography and cost were big factors. P1 said Australia was "very expensive to travel" and that this was a "drawback on a lot of tourism" they originally wanted to do. P9 similarly said "money was a big part" in determining what they could realistically do while abroad. This theme showed that tourism behaviour abroad became adaptive and shaped by constraints rather than simply following pre-departure plans.

Finding 4: Travel competence develops while abroad

Another pattern observed among the participants was learning to travel more effectively through direct experience. Their tourism-related consumer behaviour changed not only because they adapted once they were abroad, but also because they developed practical competence in booking, transportation, budgeting, accommodation, and safety. P8 reflected that they learned "Eurorail is not the way to go" and that buying individual train tickets was much cheaper than expected. P7 described being fined in another country because she did not understand the local transit system, which led to her becoming more careful about researching transport in the future. P4 similarly explained that she learned through locals which low-cost airlines and booking

options were most useful when planning cheap weekend trips. Participants also highlighted gaps in institutional preparation. P1 said there was “not a lot on safety” for students leaving to travel alone. P10 said they needed “better transparency about visa requirements” and more realistic communication about housing and documentation. These comments suggest that tourism-related consumer behaviour became more informed over the study abroad experience as students developed their travel competence through direct experiences.

Finding 5: Social relationships shape tourism decisions

Tourism behaviour abroad was frequently influenced socially. Students did not make all travel decisions independently. Friends, family, and local connections strongly influenced where they went, when they travelled, and how they evaluated those experiences. P4 said that friends were “probably the number one influence” on what they experienced while abroad. They described situations where a friend would suggest a trip and they would join with little planning in advance. P8 had a different experience and described how a negative group trip changed their behaviour and led to them travelling more often with just one close friend instead of larger groups. P5 explained that part of choosing their host country was wanting “to all live together” with their friends and shows that social considerations shaped decisions from the beginning. This theme suggests that during study abroad, tourism-related consumer behaviour was not always individual. It was often collective and dependent on interpersonal relationships.

Finding 6: Reflective and intentional behaviour afterward

After the experience, participants described a shift toward more realistic and intentional travel behaviour. Rather than simply wanting to travel more, they talked about travelling differently. P1 reflected on a broader mindset change, explaining that travel became less about checking off as many places as possible and more about “experiencing a place as a whole.” P2

also reflected that the experience made them more comfortable with independent travel and less convinced that every part of a trip had to be fully planned ahead of time. P4 said that although spontaneity was still important to them, they now wanted to travel “within the confines or boundaries” they set for themselves. This phase represented post-experience evaluation. Students looked back at what worked and what did not, and those reflections reshaped future travel behaviour. The result was a move from idealized expectations to more informed and intentional decision-making.

Summary of Findings

Overall, the findings showed that planned tourism-related consumer behaviour among study abroad students shifted across the three phases of the experience. Before departure, behaviour was mainly aspirational and shaped by expectations about what travel abroad would offer. During study abroad, behaviour became adaptive, as students responded to financial, logistical, academic, and social realities. After the experience, behaviour became more reflective and intentional as participants used what they had learned to make more realistic future travel decisions. The main finding of the study is that tourism-related consumer behaviour did not remain fixed across study abroad. It shifted from aspirational planning before departure to adaptive decision-making during the experience, and finally to more reflective and intentional travel behaviour afterward.

Contribution and Implications

This study contributed to study abroad and tourism research by showing that tourism-related behaviour changed during the experience. Previous research focused on why students chose to study abroad, where they went, or what benefits they gained (Oliveira & Soares, 2016; Petra 2020; Hung & Yen, 2020). This study looked at how their travel-related behaviour changed

before, during, and after the study abroad experience. A main contribution of the study was applying the CDM process to studying abroad. The findings showed that they first recognized a desire to travel, then gathered information and made plans, then adapted their plans once abroad, and finally reflected on their experiences when they returned home. This showed that tourism-related behaviour should be understood as a process and not as a single decision made before departure. The study also showed that study abroad students should be seen as more than learners, but also as tourism consumers. They made ongoing decisions about where to go, how much to spend, how to travel, and what experiences were worth it. Those decisions changed as they gained experience while abroad.

The findings also had practical implications. For universities and study abroad offices, one important implication was that tourism should not be treated separately from study abroad, but it is a real part of the experience. For many students, travel was central to how they understood the value of going abroad. A key recommendation was to add country-specific pre-departure orientation sessions. Participants said they needed more useful information about transportation, realistic costs, accommodation, and local travel logistics. Many of these skills were learned once students encounter problems abroad. Problem-solving is a valuable skill students should learn during their study abroad experience; however, more preparation before departure could reduce uncertainty, improve student confidence, and help students make more informed tourism-related decisions earlier in the experience. Study abroad programs could also support students by integrating more realistic travel planning resources into orientation and advising. This might include sample travel budgets, transport guidance, destination-specific safety advice, and how to balance tourism with academic commitments. This support would not be about managing students' travel directly, but it would recognize that tourism-related decision-

making was part of how students navigated the experience. Programs could also include a reflective activity after students return to give students a chance to think about how their travel behaviour changed, what they learned, and how the experience may shape future travel decisions.

For future research, this study suggests that tourism-related behaviour in study abroad should be studied across time. Instead of conducting retrospective interviews, a longitudinal design would be beneficial to see at what point students' tourism-related decisions changed. Following students before departure, during their time abroad, and after they return would give a clearer picture of when expectations shifted and what specific experiences caused those changes. It would also reduce the limits of retrospective recall and see behavioural change as it happens.

Conclusion

This study examined how planned tourism-related consumer behaviour changed before, during, and after studying abroad. The findings revealed a clear pattern. Before departure, students often held idealized travel plans and high expectations. During their time abroad, these plans changed due to factors like cost, time, transport, geography, academic demands, and social influences. After the experience, students became more realistic and deliberate in their thoughts about future travel. The main conclusion was that tourism-related consumer behaviour shifted from aspirational planning to adaptive decision-making, and then to more reflective and purposeful behaviour afterwards. Overall, the study showed that studying abroad did not just change where students travelled; it also changed how they made tourism decisions.

Attribution Statement

I used Grammarly to check grammar and style checking in this report. ChatGPT was used to outline the report structure. NVivo was used to help support the analysis and coding of the interview transcripts. All findings, interpretations, and conclusions presented in this report are my own.

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Appendix A

Interview Questions

Background

1. How did you first learn about the opportunity to study abroad?
2. What motivated you to participate in a study abroad program?
3. Where did you complete your study abroad program?
4. What factors influenced your choice of destination?
5. How long were you abroad?
6. When did you complete your study abroad?
7. Had you traveled internationally before this experience?
8. Was there any information you wish you had received before departure that would have helped with planning tourism or travel?

Pre-Departure

1. Before leaving, how important was tourism as part of your study abroad experience
2. Did you plan specific trips or tourism activities before departure? If so, how detailed were those plans?
3. What factors influenced your tourism planning before departure? (examples: cost, safety, distance, recommendations, social media)

During Study Abroad

4. Once abroad, how did your tourism behaviour compare to what you had planning before leaving?
5. What factors most influenced your tourism decisions while you were abroad?
6. Did your approach to planning or decision-making change while you were abroad? If so, how?
7. Describe a tourism experience that changed how you approached future travel decisions during your stay?

Post-Study Abroad

8. Looking back, how would you describe your tourism behaviour during study abroad?
9. How did your study abroad experience change how you now plan or think about future travel?
10. If you compare yourself before, during, and after study abroad, where do you think the biggest change occurred and why?
11. Overall, how would you describe your study abroad experience?

Appendix B

Consent Form

(Please note that the TRU letterhead is used in the consent form. For formatting purposes, it is not included here)

The Experiential Tourism Decision-Making Process of Studying Abroad: A Case Study of Canadian University Students in British Columbia

You are being invited to participate in a research study. This form is designed to provide you with information about this study.

I am Emma Leach at the Tourism Management Department at Thompson Rivers University, BC, Canada. I can be reached at leache20@mytru.ca and 778-868-8775. I am currently working on a research project as part of the graduating seminar course under the supervision of Dr. Yaou Hu, who can be reached at yhu@tru.ca or 250 371 5784. TMGT 4020 is a capstone course in which students complete independent research project. The purpose of this course is to integrate knowledge gained throughout the degree and demonstrate Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILO) at Thompson Rivers University. This course has been approved with by the TRU Research Ethics Board #100999.

This research examines how Canadian students in British Columbia make decisions about studying abroad and how they reflect on their experiences after returning. The study focuses on understanding decision-making factors, expectations, planning processes, and perceived outcomes of studying abroad. To ensure the study is relevant, only adults who are 18 years or older, studied at a post-secondary institute in British Columbia, and have completed a study abroad experience will be eligible to participate. In this interview, you will answer questions about how you first learned about studying abroad, why you chose to participate, factoring influencing your destination choice, planning and preparation experiences, reflections after returning home, and suggestions for improving study abroad programs. This interview takes approximately 45-60 minutes to complete. Your involvement will help improve understanding of study abroad decision-making and may provide practical recommendations for universities and study abroad programs in British Columbia. If you have any questions about your rights as a participant, complaints about the informed consent process of this research study or experience an adverse event (something goes wrong), please contact supervisor. You can also reach out to the Chair of REB, contact information: TRU-REB@tru.ca or 250.828.5000.

Anonymity and data usage: Please note that your participation will be confidential. No individual participant will be identified in any way. The interview will be audio-recorded for transcription purposes only. Audio recordings and transcripts will be stored securely on the researcher's password-protected computer. Interview data will be coded and analyzed in NVivo,

a qualitative data analysis software program. The researcher is going to use the summarized and anonymized data for academic purposes, including research papers, and presentations.

Risk and benefits: There will be minimal risk or discomfort, which means that you should not experience any more difficulty than that which would occur in your normal daily life. By participating in this study, you will help improve the understanding of consumer decision-making in study abroad contexts, student's expectations, and program planning and information delivery. In addition, your response will contribute to academic research and may help universities improve study abroad design and student support services.

Withdrawal: Participation is completely voluntary and not connected to any academic or professional obligation. You have the right to withdraw from this study at any time before, during, and after the interview. You can simply let the researcher know that you are not willing to participate anymore. Once you withdraw from this study, your incomplete interview will be permanently deleted. After the interview, you may withdraw within four weeks. If you choose to do so, please email the researcher, and your interview data will be permanently deleted.

Information security and data storage: Data will be safely stored in the researchers' password-protected computer in a locked university office. After 5 years, the data will be permanently deleted.

Research findings: If you are interested in the findings of this research, you can contact the research team and receive a copy of the executive summary when the project is completed, May 2026. If you have any questions or require further information about the survey, don't hesitate to reach out to me.

If you consent to participate in this study, please indicate your consent below. If you decide not to participate, you may simply exit this page. Thank you for your time and participation!

Q1 I have read and understand the information regarding this research project.

Yes

No

Q2 You must be 18 years or older, currently studying or previously enrolled at a post-secondary institution in British Columbia and have completed a study abroad experience to participate. Do you meet these criteria

Yes

No

Q3 I consent to participate in this project.

Yes

No

Q4 I understand that this interview will be audio-recorded, and I consent to this recording

Yes

No

Appendix C

Transcript Summary

P1
<p>Home university: Thompson Rivers University</p> <p>Study abroad destinations: Perth, Australia, England, Japan</p> <p>Duration: One semester in Perth, one semester in England, 3 week field school in Japan (Summer, Fall and Winte 2023/2024)</p> <p>Prior international travel: Yes</p> <p>Key ideas: Travel was a strong part of the experience. Her destination choices were shaped by language interest, family heritage, and nature. Once abroad, Australia’s distance and cost limited broader tourism. Afterward, travel became less about seeing everything and more about deeper experience. Wanted more safety and travel preparation.</p> <p>Quotes: “It [Australia]was very expensive to travel.” Travel became more about “experiencing a place as a whole.” Locals knew the “coolest little niche spots.” “I had all these ideas in my mind of what I wanted to do, but I didn’t really plan in advance because I didn’t know what it would be like.”</p>
P2
<p>Home university: Thompson Rivers University</p> <p>Study abroad destination: Germany</p> <p>Duration: 5 months, 2024</p> <p>Prior international travel: Yes, mostly group-based/family trips</p> <p>Key ideas: Europe’s connectivity was appealing before departure and was influenced by family stories. Germany stood out because of his German language studies and family</p>

connections. Study abroad increased confidence with independent travel. Became less focused on planning every detail perfectly.

Quotes: “Not everything needed to be planned perfectly beforehand”/ became more comfortable “just looking up trains and going.” “A large motivation came from wanting to explore a little bit, get out to see a little bit of that world and broaden your perspective.”

P3

Home university: Thompson Rivers University

Study abroad destination: Tasmania, Australia

Duration: 2 semesters, completed 2023

Prior international travel: Limited, mainly domestic trips

Key ideas: Destination decisions can change suddenly due to institutional circumstances. They originally expected broader Australia travel, but being placed in Tasmania shifted their behaviour toward more local tourism. Planning was flexible and shaped by language comfort, climate, safety, work and affordability.

Quotes: There was “no real plan set in place.” / They often “just woke up and did what we wanted to do that day.” They ended up in “a part of Australia that [they] didn’t even know existed.” “I was going more for the abroad part, less than the study part.” “I did a lot more local tourism than I did country tourism.”

P4

Home university: University of British Columbia

Study abroad destination: England

Duration: 2 semesters, 2021-2022, stayed longer for travel after

Prior international travel: Yes

Key ideas: Travel was the main motivation. Tourism decisions abroad were highly spontaneous. Friends strongly influenced travel. Afterward, spontaneity was still valued, but with more boundaries. Highlighted how much practical travel knowledge she had to learn informally from locals.

Quotes: “There were a few times I just went to the airport and said, like, what’s cheap right now?” “There are a lot of things that I wish I knew going into it about travel and tourism that I had to figure out on my own.”

P5

Home university: University of British Columbia Okanagan

Study abroad destination: Amsterdam, Netherlands

Duration: About 5 months, 2025

Prior international experience: Limited, trips throughout the States and Mexico

Key ideas: Europe and iconic destinations were important. The participant had a strong list of desired experiences and was influenced by group planning.

Quotes: Tourism was “pretty important and there were “strict things I wanted to see.”

P6

Home university: Capilano University

Study abroad destination: Sydney, Australia

Duration: About 4.5 months (one semester), plus travel afterward, Spring 2023

Prior international experience: Yes

Key ideas: Travel was a strong motivation, but the participant also valued having one place to live and then travelling from there. Australia was not their first choice, but the placement process and family connections made it a good fit.

Quotes: It was nice to “have a base somewhere.” Travel was appealing because “it could happen from a place that already felt stable.”

P7

Home university: University of British Columbia

Study abroad destination: Amsterdam, Netherlands

Duration: One semester (August-December 2025)

Prior international experience: Only North America

Key ideas: Travel was central before departure and planned in detail. Once abroad, the pace became tiring and changed how future travel was imagined.

Quotes: “I chose Amsterdam because it was central and had a major airport, so it was easy to travel.” “Basically, all my September and August” plans were made before leaving. They realized that they wanted future trips to be more “laid-back.”

P8

Home university: Thompson Rivers University

Study abroad destination: Salzburg, Austria

Duration: About 5 months (one semester) plus extended Europe travel, 2024

Prior international experience: Yes

Key ideas: They knew they wanted to study abroad for years and choice a university that offered it. Austria became their final choice because of a scholarship. Pre-departure planning was flexible. Actual travel choices became shaped by cost, proximity, and transport learning.

Group dynamics also changed later travel behaviour

Quotes: Early ideas came from places that “looked cool” and “visiting nearby places started to make sense” once they were actually living there. “I feel like I think it [travel] through in a lot more detail now than I did before.”

P9

Home university: Thompson Rivers University

Study abroad destination, Tasmania, Australia

Duration: About 5.5 months (one semester plus some travel after), 2023

Prior international experience: Yes

Key ideas: Tourism mattered in destination choice. Budgeting and settling in changed the pace of travel.

Quotes: “We planned Hawaii and Sydney... but not Tasmania.”/ It was more like “okay, we live here now.”

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Home university: University of British Columbia Okanagan

Study abroad destination: Milan, Italy

Duration: Fall 2023 semester

Prior international experience: Yes

Key ideas: Tourism was important in choosing a central, attractive city. Visa and housing issues shaped the experience and highlighted the need for clearer practical information.

Quotes: They wanted to live in a “mainstream location” and “I picked Milan because I know of kind of the tourism associated with like the fashion culture.”

Appendix D

TCPS 2: CORE-2022 (Course on Research Ethics) Certificate

