

# An Intersectional Investigation of Study Abroad Intent among Latino/a and White First-generation College Students

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## Abstract

Despite a marked increase in study abroad participation in recent decades, first-generation students and Students of Color remain vastly underrepresented. The current study sought to expand the extant literature on first-generation and Latino/a students' study abroad participation by applying an intersectional approach to identifying predictors of study abroad intent. A total of 478 undergraduates (Latino/a and White; first-generation and continuing-generation) completed a questionnaire based on previously identified predictors of study abroad intent. Separate binary logistic regression analyses for each of the four (ethnicity x generational status) subgroups indicated that personality and intercultural variables predicted intent to study abroad solely for the White continuing-generation students. Exposure to study abroad was a primary predictor of intent across subgroups, yet significant between-group differences emerged regarding the source and extent of this exposure. Implications for study abroad advising and inclusive participation are discussed.

## Keywords:

study abroad, first-generation college students, Latino/a, intersectionality

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## Introduction

Over the past decade, scholars and practitioners have increasingly sounded the alarm about inequities in U.S. students' study abroad participation (e.g., Bruz & Fry, 2010; Salisbury et al., 2011). Although the diversity of study abroad participants has grown

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somewhat in recent years, there remain multiple underrepresented groups, including Students of Color and first-generation (FG) students. The term first-generation student is defined by most educational researchers as a student without a parent or guardian who has completed a bachelor's degree (Toutkoushian et al., 2018). As compared with continuing-generation (CG) students, FG students are more likely to be Students of Color and to come from low-income households (Tolan & McCullers, 2018).

Although FG students make up approximately one-third of those enrolled in U.S. post-secondary institutions (Cataldi et al., 2018), only 9% of FG college seniors reported participating in study abroad as compared with 20% of their CG peers (National Survey of Student Engagement, 2020). Of the 347,099 U.S. students who participated in study abroad during the 2018-2019 academic year, 31% identified as Students of Color, whereas 69% identified as White (Institute of International Education, 2020). Like FG students, Students of Color study abroad at numbers disproportionate to their college enrollment. For example, Latino/a<sup>1</sup> students participated in study abroad at a rate approximately half of what would be expected based on enrollment numbers (McClure et al., 2010).

Access to study abroad is a matter of educational equity, as it is one of several high impact practices (HIPs) associated with greater student retention and engagement (Kuh, 2008). These HIPs may be particularly impactful for students from underrepresented groups such as FG students (Kuh, 2008), who are at greater risk of not completing their college degree (U.S. Census, 2010). However, due in part to intuitional barriers, FG students are less likely than their CG counterparts to have been informed about HIPs and the benefits of these practices to their undergraduate career (Demetriou et al., 2017).

Calls for more inclusive participation in study abroad often focus on the benefits specific to this HIP, which prepare students for a rapidly changing and globally interconnected economy (Tolan & McCullers, 2018). These include greater emotional resilience, (Earnest et al., 2016), intercultural competence, global understanding, and world mindedness (Behrnd & Porzelt, 2010; Douglas & Joan-Rikkers, 2001; Kitsantas, 2004), increased foreign language interest and competence (Opper et al., 1990), and greater environmental citizenship (Tarrant et al., 2013; Wynveen, et al., 2012). For FG students in particular, study abroad was also associated with degree completion as well as self-assessed independence, self-confidence, and willingness to engage with unfamiliar individuals and activities (Demetriou et al., 2017). Students who are unable to study abroad are not only excluded from these benefits but also from certain academic programs that include study abroad as a requirement. For example, Wilkie (2017) described a university with at least 32 majors and minors that require an international experience. Given these advantages, equal access to study abroad has been described as a social justice issue (Martinez et al., 2010). Sweeney (2013, p.1) stated that it is thus critical that researchers better understand the “pathways to study abroad” for students from underrepresented groups.

Previous research has identified several predictors of study abroad intent and participation, including female gender, concern about completing one's major, positive expectations of study abroad, interest in language learning, intergroup attitudes, such as prejudice and ethnocentrism, and personality traits, such as openness to experience and adventurousness (Goldstein & Kim, 2006; Li et al., 2013; Luo & Jamieson-Drake, 2015;

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<sup>1</sup> We appreciate the inclusive intent behind the terms “Latina/o” and “Latinx,” but have opted to use the term “Latino/a” as it may better reflect the values, traditions, and preferences of members of the diverse community it describes (de Onis, 2017; Salinas, 2020).

Schroth & McCormack, 2000; Stroud, 2010). Yet these findings may be less relevant to FG students, given their unique set of life circumstances and potential barriers.

## An Intersectional Approach

Although there exists limited research on the study abroad participation of FG students and Students of Color, to our knowledge no quantitative study has investigated how these identities may interact. As compared to conventional methodology, this intersectional approach more accurately characterizes the lived experiences of participant groups and thus allows post-secondary institutions to develop targeted interventions to reach equity outcomes (Christoffersen, 2017; Museus & Griffin, 2011). Orbe (2004), for example, identified policy implications of his finding that the salience of FG status tends to be greater for Students of Color than for their White counterparts. Such studies reinforce the need to consider the multidimensional nature of students' identities. The current investigation concerns the intersectional identities of Latino/a and White, FG and CG students.<sup>2</sup> We have focused on the experiences of Latino/a students in particular, as they are the fastest growing student group on U.S. college campuses (U.S. Department of Education, 2019) and are underrepresented in the study abroad research literature (Chang, 2017).

### Study Abroad Considerations for FG and Latino/a Students

Researchers have identified a fairly consistent set of barriers to study abroad intent and participation among FG students and Students of Color<sup>3</sup> (Blake et al., 2019; Engle, 2017; Willis, 2015). Such obstacles stem from both individual- and institutional-level conditions and include lack of exposure to study abroad, financial constraints and work obligations, concern about degree completion, family obligations and influence, anticipated discrimination, lack of personally relevant programs, and exclusionary marketing practices.

FG students may receive less exposure to the notion of study abroad than do CG students, both through formal and informal channels. Academic advisors who work with FG students may view study abroad as less feasible for these students or their advising sessions may be dominated by other concerns. A Council for Opportunity in Education survey of staff members who work with FG students found many to be themselves unfamiliar with study abroad or to be unconvinced of its value (Martinez et al., 2010). Since FG and Latino/a students tend to spend less time on campus (due to commuting, family obligations, and longer work hours), they may be less likely than their White CG counterparts to hear about the study abroad experiences of their peers – a key informal mechanism shaping study abroad intent (McClure et al., 2010; Whatley, 2018).

Cost is a central barrier to study abroad (Whatley, 2017). Although tuition and program fees may be covered by financial aid or scholarships, there are considerable upfront costs, such as airfare, passport and visa charges, and medical exams or vaccines, that typically fall to the student (Wilkie, 2017). FG students also face the opportunity costs

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<sup>2</sup> In the current study we make comparisons between Latino/a and White students to expand the extant study abroad literature, which has focused primarily on a White student population. In doing so, we aim to challenge, and not reinforce, positions of White normativity.

<sup>3</sup> We indicate intersectionality by citing overlapping groups (e.g., Latino/a and FG), which include all members of each category as well as the intersecting identities (in this instance, Latino/a CG and FG students and all other FG students, regardless of ethnicity).

of not engaging in paid work while abroad, since they are more likely to have off-campus jobs during the school year and to work longer hours than their CG peers to assist with family expenses or to finance their education (Martin, 2015; McClure et al., 2010; Pascarella et al., 2004; Tolan & McCullers, 2018). Working long hours during the school year may indirectly disadvantage FG students when applying to study abroad programs or scholarships with a minimum GPA requirement, since work obligations may make it difficult to find adequate time to devote to studies. In addition to costs associated with study abroad itself, students with limited financial resources, often FG college students and Student of Color, may be concerned that a study abroad experience will delay their degree completion and that they will thus incur increased tuition payments (McClure et al., 2010).

Family opinions and expectations may be a deterrent to study abroad for Latino/a and FG students, particularly since they are more likely than their White CG peers to live at home and shoulder family responsibilities (Azmitia et al., 2018). For Latino/a students, this sense of responsibility may be strengthened by *familismo*, which Tello and Lonn (2017) describe as a core aspect of Latino/a culture, emphasizing family cohesion and prioritizing family over the individual. The expectation that one may need to assist in family matters could make it difficult for students to make a commitment to study abroad (McClure et al., 2010), which is often required as much as a year in advance of the program start date. As compared with the families of CG students, those of FG students tend to be less familiar with study abroad and to view it less favorably (Brux & Fry, 2010). For the many FG students whose parents struggled to immigrate, it may be difficult to make a convincing argument for the need to leave the country, either for international or academic experiences (Wilkie, 2017), particularly when neither the student nor the parent has experience with study abroad.

Finally, Latino/a and FG students may be deterred from study abroad due to providers' or institutions' exclusionary marketing which features portrayals dominated by affluent White individuals seeking adventure by interacting with a culture that differs from their own (Gathogo & Horton, 2018). Although previous research has linked adventurousness with interest in study abroad and more immersive programs (Goldstein, 2015; Li et al., 2013; Schroth & McCormack, 2000), there is reason to believe that adventurousness may be a weaker predictor of Latino/a and FG students' intent to study abroad, particularly if doing so is framed as largely recreational (Gathogo & Horton, 2018). Since most post-secondary institutions are geared toward students raised with dominant culture, middle class values (Stephens et al., 2012), Latino/a and FG students' initial encounters with college may be similar to "entering an 'alien culture'" (Orbe, 2004, p. 133). Thus, for these students, promotional materials that emphasize interacting across cultures may be less compelling if doing so is already an everyday experience.

Nonetheless, these same life experiences that result in a sense of outsider status relative to the dominant culture may require FG, and Latino/a students in particular, to develop skills that are advantageous in a study abroad context. Orbe (2004, p. 133) suggested that "negotiating multiple layers of identity" is central to FG students' ability to move between the requirements of home and school environments. Such cultural navigational skills are valuable in study abroad experiences which require students to interact with individuals who differ from themselves on multiple dimensions (e.g., language and communication practices; social norms). Volpone et al. (2018), for example, found an association between the number of minority statuses experienced by international students in their home country and degree of acculturation to the host culture.

Lu et al. (2015, p. 446) reported that Black students studying in China capitalized on the ability to code switch to facilitate intercultural communication and “were less concerned about 'looking different from everyone there' compared to their White counterparts because they were already used to being a racial minority...”. Students studying in heritage destinations may also draw on forms of community capital to facilitate a successful study abroad experience. For example, Wick et al. (2019) found that Latino/a students studying in Costa Rica were able to take advantage of their pre-existing strengths through familial, aspirational, linguistic, and resistant capital to frame and enhance their abroad experience.

Thus, based on the aforementioned study abroad considerations for FG and Latino/a students, we predicted:

1. Significantly greater scores on intent to study abroad, perceived likelihood of studying abroad, and ease of imagining oneself abroad for CG than for FG participants and for White than Latino/a students, respectively.
2. A different set of predictors for study abroad intent for FG as compared to CG students.
  - a. For FG students we expected that study abroad intent would be predicted by: Gender, ethnicity, income, heritage language, exposure to study abroad, concern about completing one’s major, and family attitudes.
  - b. For CG students, we predicted that study abroad intent would additionally be predicted by adventurousness and the intercultural attitudes of intercultural communication apprehension and ethnocentrism.
3. To investigate intersectionality, we focused on the interaction of ethnicity with generational status. We expected that adventurousness and the intercultural variables would more strongly predict study abroad intent for White CG students as compared to FG and Latino/a students.

## Method

This study received Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval and all procedures (e.g., recruitment, informed consent, confidentiality, debriefing, and data storage) were in compliance with IRB regulations and APA Ethical Principles.

### Participants

A total of 478 undergraduate students (66% female) participated in this study. These students were a subgroup of a larger sample and were selected based on the following criteria: (1) they identified as either Latino/a or White, (2) they had not previously studied abroad, and (3) they were not international students. These respondents had an average age of 18.63 years ( $SD = 1.27$ ) and represented a wide range of income levels. In terms of ethnicity and generational status, 60.7% were classified as CG (50 Latino/a and 244 White) and 39.3% as FG (116 Latino/a and 74 White). These students were 75.4% first year, 15.7% sophomores, 5.2% juniors and 3.3% seniors from a small, residential liberal arts college in Southern California whose participation fulfilled an Introduction to Psychology course research requirement. Academic majors and intended majors included social sciences (36.9%), mathematics and natural sciences (25.1%), business (16.2%), humanities (12.2%), and undecided or other (9.7%). A total of 25% of participants reported speaking a

language other than English at home and 77.3% had traveled outside of the United States, the majority of whom as tourists (67.1%).

## Instruments and Procedure

Students who volunteered to participate in this study were sent a link to the anonymous, online survey via e-mail. This questionnaire assessed basic demographic information, study abroad exposure, adventurousness, language interest, intercultural communication apprehension, and ethnocentrism. Concern about major completion and family attitudes were assessed using single item measures administered as part of a larger (pilot) inventory of study abroad expectations. These items were rated on a 7-point Likert scale with higher scores indicating greater agreement and were worded, respectively, as “It would be difficult to complete my major if I were to participate in a study abroad program” and (reverse scored) “My family would be enthusiastic about my participation in a study abroad program.”

**Demographic items.** The demographic items included age, gender, ethnicity, year in college, academic major, heritage language, generational status, previous travel experience, family income, and number of hours in paid work weekly during the school year.

**Study abroad self-perceptions.** Three individual items assessed study abroad self-perceptions. These included a binary (yes/no) measure of *intent* (“Do you plan to study abroad in the future?”; lower scores indicate greater intent) and two Likert scale items, assessing *perceived likelihood* (“How likely or unlikely is it that you will study abroad during your years in college?”; higher scores indicate greater likelihood) and *ease of imagining* (“How difficult or easy is it for you to imagine yourself studying abroad?”; higher scores indicate greater ease).

**Study abroad exposure.** A 3-item composite variable was developed by the authors to assess study abroad exposure ( $\alpha = .79$ ) consisting of ordinal items assessing the frequency with which respondents had discussed study abroad with faculty/staff, family, and peers. Higher scores indicate greater exposure.

**Adventurousness.** A 10-item subscale of the International Personality Item Pool Openness to Experience measure was used to assess Adventurousness (Goldberg, et al., 2006;  $\alpha = .80$ ). Higher scores indicate greater adventurousness. Previous studies support the reliability, validity, and factor structure of this measure (Ehrhart et al., 2008; Johnson, 2014).

**Language interest.** The 6-item Hembroff and Rusz (1993) Interest in Foreign Languages Scale was used to assess attitudes about the value of language learning ( $\alpha = .87$ ). Higher scores indicate a greater value. The reliability and validity of this measure has been documented (Goldstein & Kim, 2006; Hembroff & Rusz, 1993).

**Personal Report of Intercultural Communication Apprehension.** Neuliep and McCroskey's (1997a) 14-item Personal Report of Intercultural Communication Apprehension ( $\alpha = .95$ ) assesses anxiety associated with real or anticipated intercultural interaction. Higher scores on this scale indicate greater apprehension. Previous research has demonstrated the internal consistency of this measure (Lin & Rancer, 2003).

**Generalized Ethnocentrism Scale.** Neuliep and McCroskey's (1997b) Generalized Ethnocentrism Scale ( $\alpha = .90$ ) is a 22-item measure that assesses individual differences in

ethnocentrism. Higher scores indicate greater ethnocentrism. Several studies support the reliability and validity of this measure (Neuliep, 2002; Neuliep, & McCroskey, 1997b).

## Data Analysis

Data analyses took an intersectional approach to assess the impact of generational status and ethnicity on study abroad-related attitudes. The initial analyses investigated the interaction between generational status and ethnicity for each of the three study abroad self-perception items. Then, to investigate group differences in predictors of study abroad intent we used a two-stage process. First, we conducted separate logistic regression analyses for CG and FG students with the complete set of variables. Next, using only significant predictors, we conducted four separate, logistic regression analyses to identify predictors of study abroad intent for each (generational status by ethnicity) subgroup. Given the relatively small subsamples in our study and the number of possible interaction terms, we expected that the results of subgroup analyses would be more statistically sound and interpretable than were we to use a multiplicative approach examining interactions between significant predictors, generational status, and ethnicity (Christoffersen, 2017; McMaster & Cook, 2018).

## Results

Binary logistic regression was conducted to determine whether intent to study abroad could be predicted by generational status, ethnicity, or the generational status by ethnicity interaction term. A test of the full model against a constant only model was not statistically significant, indicating that the predictors could not reliably distinguish between students who did and did not intend to study abroad ( $\chi^2 = 4.62, p = ns, df = 3$ ). In fact, the majority of students across ethnic and generational groups indicated that they planned to study abroad, including 80% of White CG, 74% of Latino/a CG, 72% of White FG, and 74% of Latino/a FG students.

**Table 1. Correlations for Ordinal Predictors and Study Abroad Self-Perception Items**

Variable	Mean	SD	Ease of Imagining	Perceived Likelihood
1. Ease of Imagining	4.84	1.86	---	.77**
2. Perceived Likelihood	5.11	1.91	.77**	---
3. Income	4.14	1.84	.23**	.21**
4. Major Completion	4.20	1.60	-.25**	-.28**
5. Family Attitudes	5.62	1.44	.43**	.48**
6. Exposure	2.94	0.97	.53**	.60**
7. Adventurousness	4.53	0.87	.30**	.32**
8. Language Interest	5.82	0.90	.13*	.18**
9. Intercultural Communication	2.91	1.05	-.20**	-.10*
10. Ethnocentrism	2.46	0.70	-.09	-.10*

Note: Items rated on a 7-point scale; \* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .001$ .

Separate 2 (generational status) x 2 (ethnicity) ANOVAs were computed for the single-item measures of ease of imagining oneself studying abroad and perceived likelihood of studying abroad (see Table 1). For the *ease of imagining* item, there was a main effect for generational status,  $F(1, 468) = 13.12, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .03$ , with CG students ( $M = 5.23, SD = 1.82$ ) scoring significantly higher than FG students ( $M = 4.17, SD = 1.77$ ). There was also a main effect for ethnicity  $F(1, 468) = 19.69, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .04$ , with White students ( $M = 5.22, SD = 1.82$ ) scoring significantly higher than Latino/a students ( $M = 4.04, SD = 1.72$ ). The interaction was not significant,  $F(1, 468) = 0.03, p = ns$ . A similar pattern emerged for the *perceived likelihood* item, with a main effect for generational status,  $F(1, 405) = 7.17, p < .01, \eta_p^2 = .02$  with CG students ( $M = 5.46, SD = 1.83$ ) scoring significantly higher than FG students ( $M = 4.55, SD = 1.92$ ), and for ethnicity  $F(1, 405) = 9.43, p < .005, \eta_p^2 = .02$ , with White students ( $M = 5.45, SD = 1.86$ ) scoring significantly higher than Latino/a students ( $M = 4.48, SD = 1.86$ ). The interaction was not significant,  $F(1, 405) = 0.01, p = ns$ .

**Table 2. Binary Logistic Regression Coefficients for Study Abroad Intent by Generational Status**

	Generational Status			
	Continuing-generation		First-generation	
	Odds Ratio	95% C.I.	Odds Ratio	95% C.I.
Gender	1.03	[0.44, 2.41]	0.97	[0.37, 2.60]
Ethnicity	0.87	[0.30, 2.49]	1.32	[0.48, 3.64]
Home Language	1.39	[0.40, 4.82]	0.88	[0.32, 2.44]
Family Income	1.02	[0.82, 1.28]	1.14	[0.85, 1.54]
Major Completion	<b>1.74</b>	[1.34, 2.25]	<b>1.44</b>	[1.10, 1.88]
Family Attitudes	0.78	[0.59, 1.05]	0.85	[0.63, 1.16]
Exposure	<b>0.40</b>	[0.25, 0.63]	<b>0.17</b>	[0.09, 0.34]
Adventurousness	<b>0.44</b>	[0.27, 0.73]	0.71	[0.40, 1.24]
Language Interest	<b>0.58</b>	[0.34, 0.96]	0.74	[0.42, 1.30]
Intercultural Communication	<b>0.60</b>	[0.40, 0.90]	0.81	[0.52, 1.26]
Apprehension				
Ethnocentrism	0.83	[0.44, 1.55]	0.88	[0.42, 1.81]
<i>N</i>	234		141	

**Notes:** Hosmer and Lemeshow test shows  $CG\chi^2 = 3.61, p > .05$ ,  $FG\chi^2 = 9.46, p > .05$  for the multivariate model. Statistically significant *P*-values are indicated by bold font.

Separate binary logistic regression analyses were used to determine the combination of variables that best predict intent to study abroad for FG and CG students. Variables were entered simultaneously and included *gender, ethnicity, heritage language, income, major completion concern, family attitudes, exposure, language interest, adventurousness, intercultural communication apprehension, and ethnocentrism*. To reduce the number of variables, *weekly hours worked* was dropped from the analyses since it was significantly correlated with income ( $r^2 = .42, p < .001$ ). For both the FG and CG analyses, a test of the full model against a constant only model was statistically significant ( $FG\chi^2 = 70.73, p < .001, df = 11$ ;  $CG\chi^2 = 102.47, p < .001, df = 11$ ). *Major completion* and *exposure* were the only significant individual predictors of study abroad intent for FG students. These students were less likely to intend to study abroad if they had had little exposure to study abroad ( $B = -1.75, SE = .34, p < .001$ ) or were concerned that study abroad would interfere with completing their major ( $B = .36, SE = .14, p < .01$ ) For CG students, study abroad intent was predicted by the *exposure* ( $B = -.92, SE = .24, p < .001$ ) and *major completion* ( $B = .55, SE$



= .13,  $p < .001$ ) variables along with *language interest* ( $B = -.55$ ,  $SE = .26$ ,  $p < .05$ ), *adventurousness* ( $B = -.82$ ,  $SE = .26$ ,  $p < .005$ ), and *intercultural communication apprehension* ( $B = -.51$ ,  $SE = .21$ ,  $p < .05$ ). Like the FG students, the CG students were less likely to intend to study abroad if they had had little exposure to study abroad or were concerned that study abroad would interfere with completing their major. In addition, the CG students' intent to study abroad also decreased with lower levels of language interest and adventurousness. Contrary to our predictions, intent to study abroad was predicted by higher intercultural communication apprehension, a finding we address in the Discussion. The Nagelkerke's  $R^2$  indicated that the FG model explained 46.5% of the variation in intent; 81.5% of cases were correctly classified. The CG model explained 47.4% of the variation in intent; 85% of cases were correctly classified (see Table 2 for odds ratios).

**Table 3. Binary Logistic Regression Coefficients for Study Abroad Intent by Generational Status and Ethnicity**

	White CG		Latino/a CG		White FG		Latino/a FG	
	Odds Ratio	95% C.I.	Odds Ratio	95% C.I.	Odds Ratio	95% C.I.	Odds Ratio	95% C.I.
Major Completion	<b>1.91</b>	[1.43, 2.57]	1.29	[0.76, 2.18]	<b>1.60</b>	[1.03, 2.47]	1.32	[0.93, 1.88]
Exposure	<b>0.37</b>	[0.24, 0.59]	<b>0.10</b>	[0.03, 0.45]	<b>0.08</b>	[0.02, 0.33]	<b>0.22</b>	[0.10, 0.47]
Language Interest	<b>0.55</b>	[0.35, 0.87]	0.85	[0.39, 1.85]	0.69	[0.26, 1.79]	0.75	[0.39, 1.42]
Adventurousness	<b>0.43</b>	[0.25, 0.75]	0.32	[0.09, 1.10]	0.42	[0.16, 1.14]	0.96	[0.47, 1.96]
Intercultural Communication Apprehension	<b>0.52</b>	[0.33, 0.83]	1.76	[0.53, 5.78]	0.93	[0.43, 2.04]	0.78	[0.48, 1.25]
<i>N</i>	240		50		72		116	

**Notes:** Hosmer and Lemeshow test shows White CG  $\chi^2 = 7.01$ ,  $p > .05$ , Latino/a CG  $\chi^2 = 7.10$ ,  $p > .05$ , White FG  $\chi^2 = 9.86$ ,  $p > .05$ , Latino/a FG  $\chi^2 = 7.72$ ,  $p > .05$ , for the multivariate model. Statistically significant  $P$ -values are indicated by bold font.

To assess the intersectionality of generational status and ethnicity, additional binary logistic regression analyses were conducted for the four subsamples using the significant individual predictors of intent (*exposure*, *major completion*, *language interest*, *adventurousness*, and *intercultural communication apprehension*). A test of the full model against a constant only model was significant for each subgroup (Latino/a CG  $\chi^2 = 21.85.63$ ,  $p < .005$ ,  $df = 5$ ; White CG  $\chi^2 = 86.04$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $df = 5$ ; Latino/a FG  $\chi^2 = 32.24$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $df = 5$ ; White FG  $\chi^2 = 41.41$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $df = 5$ ). The Nagelkerke's  $R^2$  indicated that the Latino/a CG model explained 51.9% of the variation in intent with 78% of cases correctly classified and the White CG model explained 47.7% of the variation in intent with 85.8% of cases correctly classified. The Latino/a FG model explained 36.3% of the variation in intent with 77.2% of cases correctly classified and the White FG model explained 64% of the variation in intent with 88.6% of cases correctly classified. *Exposure* was the only significant individual predictor of study abroad intent for Latino/a CG ( $B = -2.22$ ,  $SE = .73$ ,  $p < .005$ ) and Latino/a FG students ( $B = -1.51$ ,  $SE = .38$ ,  $p < .001$ ), and *exposure* ( $B = -2.48$ ,  $SE = .70$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and *major completion* ( $B = .47$ ,  $SE = .22$ ,  $p < .05$ ) predicted intent for White FG students, with students less likely to intend to study abroad if they had had little exposure to study abroad or were concerned that study abroad would interfere with completing their major. For White CG students, *exposure* ( $B = -.98$ ,  $SE = .24$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and *major completion* ( $B = .65$ ,  $SE = .15$ ,  $p < .001$ ) were also significant predictors of intent, as were *language interest* ( $B = -.59$ ,  $SE = .23$ ,  $p < .05$ ), *adventurousness* ( $B = -.84$ ,  $SE = .28$ ,  $p < .005$ ), and *intercultural*

*communication apprehension* ( $B = -.65$ ,  $SE = .23$ ,  $p < .01$ ). The White CG students' intent to study abroad also decreased with lower levels of language interest and adventurousness. Once again, contrary to our expectations, intent to study abroad was predicted by higher intercultural communication apprehension (see Table 3 for odds ratios).

To unpack the finding that *exposure* was a significant predictor of intent for each subgroup, we conducted exploratory two-way ANOVAs investigating the effect of generational status and ethnicity on overall exposure and exposure via discussions with faculty/staff. For overall exposure, there was a main effect for generational status,  $F(1, 477) = 4.81$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .01$ , with CG students ( $M = 3.08$ ,  $SD = 0.98$ ) scoring significantly higher than FG students ( $M = 2.71$ ,  $SD = 0.91$ ). There was also a main effect for ethnicity  $F(1, 477) = 7.31$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .02$ , with White students ( $M = 3.07$ ,  $SD = 0.98$ ) scoring significantly higher than Latino/a students ( $M = 2.68$ ,  $SD = 0.91$ ). The interaction was not significant,  $F(1, 477) = 1.45$ ,  $p = ns$ ). For discussions with faculty/staff there were no significant main effects, however the interaction was significant [ $F(1, 476) = 4.43$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .01$ ] indicating that among the CG participants, White students ( $M = 2.33$ ,  $SD = 1.13$ ) reported significantly more discussions about study abroad with faculty/staff than did Latino/a students ( $M = 1.90$ ,  $SD = 0.84$ ).

## Discussion

The purpose of this study was to better understand the intersecting roles of ethnicity and generational status in intent to study abroad. We expected to find that CG students would score significantly higher than FG students and that White students would score significantly higher than Latino/a students on the study abroad self-perception items of *intent*, *perceived likelihood*, and *ease of imagining*. This was the case for two of these items. The study abroad *intent* item was not predicted by generational status, ethnicity, or their interaction. One possible explanation is that students perceive this item as indicating a desire to study abroad (Salisbury et al., 2009). If so, it is not surprising that many participants expressed this desire, particularly since they attend an institution where approximately 50% of students participate in study abroad programs. In contrast to *intent*, the *perceived likelihood* and *ease of imagining* items may tap into students' study abroad-related self-concept. For both of these variables, CG students scored significantly higher than FG students and White students scored significantly higher than Latino/a students. It is well established that being able to envision oneself in an action is associated with the self-efficacy needed to perform that action (Bandura, 1977). Thus, additional research is needed to identify the source of study abroad self-perceptions and strategies for enhancing their inclusivity. For example, in line with the finding that vicarious experiences enhance self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977), hearing from FG study abroad returnees has been a successful strategy for increasing the study abroad participation of FG students (Tolan & McCullers, 2018).

We expected that intercultural attitudes and adventurousness would be less relevant to FG and Latino/a students, who may have had considerable experience with negotiating unfamiliar environments and may be more focused on academic and career-related motives for study abroad. This was confirmed in the intersectional stage of our analyses. These findings qualify previous research indicating that personality and intercultural variables are predictive of study abroad intent. Rather, *adventurousness*, *language interest* and *intercultural communication apprehension* were only relevant to the study abroad intent of the White CG students. The finding that *adventurousness* was a predictor of intent

for the White CG students and not for the other groups, adds credence to concerns raised about the adventure-oriented nature of promotional materials for study abroad programs and supports the suggestion that these images and narratives must deemphasize this component and instead prioritize positive educational outcomes that can prepare student sojourners for careers in a globally interconnected world (Gathogo & Horton, 2018). In addition, the finding that *language interest* was predictive of study abroad intent for the White CG students but not for the other groups has important implications. As indicated in previous research, for White CG students, campus activities and pre-departure preparation aimed at developing and enhancing intercultural skills and attitudes appears to be central to interest in study abroad participation. For Latino/a students and White FG students, the ability to cross cultures may be an existing strength which advisors, study abroad recruiters, and pre-departure trainers can emphasize and build upon to enhance the self-efficacy required for study abroad participation.

We were puzzled by the finding that for CG students as a whole, and White CG students in particular, the regression results indicated greater *intercultural communication apprehension* was predictive of intent to study abroad. Although it is possible that this finding was a result of intercorrelations among variables, these associations did not approach standard criteria for multicollinearity (Berry & Feldman, 1985). In addition, post-hoc analysis of group means found no significant differences between the *intercultural communication apprehension* scores of those who did and did not intend to study abroad, and, with the exception of the Latino/a FG group, the means indicated lower apprehension associated with intent to study abroad (as would be expected). Future research might explore alternative strategies for assessing anxiety associated with intercultural interaction as well as the possibility that intercultural communication apprehension serves as a motivator for Latino/a FG students to seek experiences abroad.

Across groups, *exposure* was the strongest predictor of study abroad intent. In addition, White and CG students reported greater exposure to study abroad than did Latino/a and FG students, respectively. Furthermore, within the CG group, Latino/as reported significantly fewer discussions about study abroad with faculty/staff than did White students. We acknowledge the possibility that intent to study abroad may to some extent drive exposure, rather than the reverse, though we believe that it is highly unlikely that this is an entirely unidirectional process, particularly for students early in their college careers. Even if it were the case that ethnic differences in discussions with advisors are a result of differences in study abroad intent, these findings suggest that faculty and staff should be compensating for group differences in information seeking by broaching the topic of study abroad with students who do not initiate such discussions. Academic advisors can play an important role in diversifying study abroad participation by providing information about study abroad opportunities to those who do not fit the profile of the typical participant (e.g., White, affluent female) and by detailing the relevance of this HIP for academic goals and career opportunities. The ability of advisors to do so, however, may require that they receive training to enhance cultural competence (Torres et al., 2019). Other strategies for familiarizing students with study abroad include targeted presentations to organizations attended by underrepresented students during the first years of college, facilitating attendance at study abroad fairs, assisting with applications and financial aid, and involving family members in information sessions (Martinez et al., 2010).

## Limitations and Future Research

Our sample is limited in some important ways. The data come from a single, four-year institution, which may not be representative in terms of its demographics or opportunities for study abroad. Furthermore, the size of our sample did not allow us to address intersectionality with other identities (e.g., sexual orientation, disability) or within-group diversity among the Latino/a students (e.g., ethnic origin, heritage language use, level of acculturation). Finally, we focused on intended, rather than actual, enrollment in study abroad programs. Longitudinal research is needed to more accurately assess the factors that determine FG and Latino/a students' study abroad participation.

Several unanswered questions remain from the current study. It is not clear why income was not a predictor of study abroad, particularly among the FG students. One possibility is that these students attend an institution which maintains an on-campus fee structure for those who study abroad for a semester. In addition, there is some indication that gender may interact with income to predict study abroad intent (Hurst, 2019), a possibility that was not investigated in the current study. It is also unclear why major completion was a predictor for White students, regardless of generational status, and not for Latino/a students. Future research might assess, in greater depth, students' expectations about the academic consequences of study abroad. Finally, we did not investigate the degree to which study abroad intent might be influenced by concerns about experiencing prejudice or stereotyping abroad (e.g., Sweeney, 2013). Future research might explore the extent to which students from underrepresented groups anticipate discriminatory treatment from members of the host culture or from home country peers (Brux & Fry, 2010; Willis, 2015).

## Conclusion

This study identified exposure as a source of inequality central to study abroad intent. Latino/a and FG students were less likely than White and CG students respectively to be exposed to study abroad or to be able to envision themselves as participants. Furthermore, White CG students were more likely than Latino/a and FG students to have discussed study abroad with a faculty/staff member. Additional research is needed to investigate the nature, mechanism, and content of exposure to study abroad and how it varies with student demographics and identities. These findings support the value of an intersectional approach to understanding study abroad intent, participation, and outcomes. By investigating the role of study abroad-related life experiences and circumstances across interacting identities, we can better understand and address potential inequities in this important, high impact practice.

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