

Study Abroad for Preservice Teachers: A Critical Literature Review with Considerations for Research and Practice

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Abstract

This article applies a postcolonial analytical framework to critically review empirical literature on study abroad for preservice teachers (PSTs). Our systematic search of scholarly databases identified 47 empirical studies of study abroad programs for PSTs in the 2000-2019 time period. Our analysis of these 47 studies is driven by the objectives to (a) understand geographic patterns in study abroad of PSTs, (b) examine the topics, conceptual frames, and implementation of study abroad of PSTs, (c) explore how study abroad for PSTs is currently being conceptualized and studied, and (d) critically analyze how these geographic patterns and study abroad programmatic and research trends are situated within broader North-South relations (Major & Santoro, 2016). Using geovisualizations we illustrate patterns in the countries of origin of PSTs and the countries in which they study abroad. We find that the majority of PSTs are from the United States and are traveling to countries in the North. When examining the content and programming of study abroad, we find many programs focus on cultivating professional skills for PSTs such as language fluency for foreign language teachers and intercultural competence. After establishing these patterns, we pay particular attention to the 23 studies in our sample that examine PSTs traveling to regions in the Global South. We conclude by offering considerations for future research and highlighting practices for program design that encourage PSTs to reflect upon global power differentials and complexities.

Keywords

Study abroad; Preservice teachers; Global competency; Teacher education; Postcolonialism

Introduction

Experiences abroad can equip future teachers with important skills such as global competency, intercultural sensitivity, and foreign language abilities and pedagogies (Rahatzad, Sasser, Phillion, Karimi, Deng, & Akiyama, 2013). Given these potential impacts, study abroad programs for preservice teachers (PSTs) are increasingly offered through teacher education programs (Cushner, 2007). This article contributes to research and practice by

presenting a critical review of empirical literature focused on PST study abroad programs. To the best of our knowledge, no meta-analyses or comprehensive literature reviews of PST study abroad exist, and therefore this article offers a novel contribution by reviewing, synthesizing, and critiquing this literature base. We identified and analyzed 47 publications featuring PST study abroad in the 2000-2019 time period, and in this article we highlight and analyze geographic,

programmatic, and research patterns. A postcolonial framework guides our critical analysis of these patterns.

After presenting background about study abroad for PSTs, we introduce the postcolonial framework applied for our analysis. This leads into a discussion of the methods we employed for reviewing literature and analyzing geographic, programmatic, and research trends. Our findings section reveals a dominance of programs originating from countries in the Global North (North) and carried out through short-term, faculty-led models. We consider the tradeoffs of existing approaches and profile trips that thoughtfully engage with issues of power and privilege. In our conclusion and discussion section, we offer considerations for research and practice.

Background

In recent years, the goal of supporting PSTs' global competency has emerged as particularly important due to the increased diversity teachers encounter in their classrooms (Zhao, 2010). As Cushner (2007) writes, "More than ever, there is the need for preservice teachers to have significant cross-cultural experience that will enable them to teach with, work with, and continue to learn from people different from themselves" (p. 37). In response to this need, faculty in teacher education programs have created new coursework and programming to prepare future teachers to engage with people whose backgrounds and identities differ from their own.

The potential of study abroad to deliver intense cross-cultural experiences is perhaps why study abroad is increasingly offered as a promising practice for teacher education programs (Rahatzad, Sasser, Phillion, Karimi, Deng, & Akiyama, 2013). Through study abroad, PSTs can gain unique exposure to diverse populations as well as experience being a

cultural outsider. These potential benefits have led to the expansion of study abroad programs for PSTs in recent years (Phillion, Malewski, & Sharma, 2009).

Compared to most other college majors, students in teacher preparation programs have relatively rigid course and internship requirements. Traditional long-term, immersive study abroad programs are often infeasible for PSTs due to these requirements. For PSTs to study abroad, short-term experiences that meet certain requirements of their teacher education degree are often most appealing. These experiences have commonalities with short-term international service learning (ISL) trips, as PSTs may fulfill internship requirements through tutoring or classroom-teaching abroad. Given this overlap with ISL, our study of PST study abroad is informed by ongoing debates in ISL scholarship.

International volunteering, or ISL, is supported by a range of stakeholders who emphasize "impacts on global equity" and "professional identities" of volunteers (Baillie Smith & Laurie, 2011, p. 545). However, because ISL programs frequently involve volunteers of relative privilege volunteering in poorer communities abroad, Tiessen (2018) in a recent book urges researchers and program designers to interrogate the extent to which ISL perpetuates and/or reduces existing inequalities. For example, short-term programs that emphasize the skills volunteers gain may deepen inequalities through accruing benefits to volunteers rather than host communities (Baillie Smith & Laurie, 2011; Tiessen, 2018). Moreover, programs can inadvertently promote harmful stereotypes about people in the Global South (South), and the ways that foreign volunteers "save" them, as Onyenekwu, Angeli, Pinto, and Douglas (2017) identify through analyzing teaching abroad programs in Africa.

ISL scholars have also raised questions about the neoliberalization of volunteer programs through an “uncritical pedagogy of development and a heavy emphasis on ‘difference making’ and curriculum vitae building” (Griffiths, 2014, p. 205). In a study of Canadian youth volunteering abroad, Tiessen (2012) finds a “one-directional flow of benefits from the Global South to the Northern-based volunteers” (p. 1). Many ISL scholars apply postcolonial theory in order to interrogate these global flows (e.g., Onyenekwu, Angeli, Pinto, & Douglas, 2017; Tiessen, 2012; 2018).

Research on the impact of study abroad has followed the growth in PST study abroad programs. This study offers an attempt to synthesize and critique the literature base. We direct our attention not only to U.S. PSTs (the primary focus of the current literature base) but also to the communities they encounter while abroad and the global power relations within which their experiences abroad (and domestically) are situated.

Theoretical Framework

Our analysis draws from postcolonial theory. As Major and Santoro (2016) explain, postcolonial theory is “concerned with how colonial discourses continue to shape ways of talking, thinking, and being in the world” (p. 464). Study abroad programs often involve students from “developed” countries going to locations in “developing” countries. Typically, these study abroad locations have a long and contested history with visitors from the Northern Hemisphere—a history marked by exploitative colonial relations, slavery, and hegemony, and with a cumulative effect of accruing benefits to those in the North at the expense of those in the South (Nordtveit, 2010; Stein, Andreotti, Bruce, & Suša, 2016). Postcolonial theory research “critically engages with the legacy of colonisation, and questions

whether the global system could not in certain cases be constructed as a second colonisation” (Nordtveit, 2010, p. 322).

The language of “Global South” and “Global North” grows out of postcolonial theory and offers a shift away from geographic distinctions dependent on development categories and trajectories (e.g., “Third World,” “developing countries”). Broadly, the South refers to regions of Latin America, Asia, Africa, and Oceania, while the North refers to regions of North America and Europe.¹ As Dados and Connell (2012) contend,

[this classification] functions as more than a metaphor for underdevelopment. It references an entire history of colonialism, neo-imperialism, and differential economic and social change through which large inequalities in living standard, life expectancy, and access to resources are maintained. (p. 13)

Thus, the North/South framework invites examinations of relations which perpetuate global inequalities. Study abroad, an inherently relational and international experience, lends itself to this way of conceptualizing interactions and geographies. The postcolonial framework is most apt for studying interactions between the North and the South, yet, adopting this framework requires researchers to engage with questions of global inequality regardless of where programming occurs. Additionally, scholars have argued that there are Souths in the North, and vice versa (Agnew, 2001); it may be possible for some students to travel to the South without leaving the comforts and amenities of the North. Ogden (2008) terms this model of study abroad a “view from the veranda” (p. 35), because it provides a form of travel where students are largely insulated from their surroundings. Metaphorically, students are sitting on a comfortable veranda simply observing the environment rather than participating in it.

Further, Ogden (2008) explores the extent to which current trends in study abroad mirror patterns of colonial mobilities. In recent decades, the number of U.S. students who study abroad—particularly through short-term and faculty-led modalities—has grown, and Ogden identifies that study abroad program designers are increasingly pressured to provide a study abroad “product” which affords students both excitement and comfort. Programs emerging from these pressures often de-emphasize cultural immersion experiences such as language-learning and homestay and spare students the discomfort of feeling like a cultural outsider. Likening this to a “colonial” experience, Ogden writes,

[h]istorically, the practice of colonialism involved the transfer of people to new territories where they lived for extended periods of time while maintaining allegiance to their home country...If an analogy could thus be drawn with education abroad, a colonial system might be described as the infrastructure which supports the privileged position of the student over the local. (p. 40)

Postcolonial theory offers ways of examining how study abroad perpetuates or challenges power dynamics characteristic of colonialism.

The analysis we undertake in this literature review is also shaped by our positionality, defined by Hay (2005) as “social, locational, and ideological placement relative to the research project” (p. 290). We approach this research as scholars situated in the North at U.S. universities who engage in applied international work. Multiple authors have led study abroad trips in the South and are interested in designing meaningful experiences for PSTs from the United States and other countries. Additionally, each of the four authors is a native English speaker with some limited non-English background (including Chichewa, French, Polish, and Swahili). These language abilities, as well as the dominance of English as a

publication language, directed us to manuscripts published in English. Our institutional affiliations facilitated access to a vast array of educational research databases and resources to undertake this systematic literature review.

Method

In this critical systematic review of literature, we aim to both describe study abroad patterns for preservice teachers and interrogate how these patterns reflect, trouble, and reinforce colonial power dynamics between the North and South. Four objectives drove our analysis: (a) understand the geographic patterns in study abroad of PSTs, (b) examine the topics, conceptual frames, and implementation of study abroad of PSTs, (c) explore how study abroad for PSTs is currently being conceptualized and studied, and (d) critically analyze how these geographic patterns and programmatic and research trends are situated within broader North-South relations.

We examined multiple databases for literature from 2000 to 2019. Informed by Anderson-Levitt’s (2017) guide to searching world literature, both open-access and subscription databases were included. We searched the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ), Education Resource Information Center (ERIC), Sociological Abstracts, and PsycINFO in order to retrieve articles spanning a range of disciplines and authorship. We applied search terms that captured study abroad (e.g., “education abroad,” “study abroad,” “study tour”) and preservice teachers (e.g., “teacher candidates,” “preservice teachers,” “student teachers”). **Appendix A** offers comprehensive details of our search in which we retrieved 87 English-language peer-reviewed articles. Abstracts were reviewed to ensure articles were empirical studies focused on the topic of study abroad programs for K-12 PSTs. This review of abstracts winnowed our sample to 47

publications, which were then carefully read and analyzed by the authors. **Appendix B** presents our article sample.

Our research objectives informed how we generated and analyzed data about these 47 articles. To organize the data, a spreadsheet was created with columns indicating specific information, such as the origin and destination country of each study abroad program. We also collected the following programmatic data: program length, model (e.g., faculty-led), program purpose, and activities PSTs engaged in. To assess how study abroad is being researched, we retrieved information on study methods, samples, conceptual frameworks, findings, and stated implications.

For our geographic analysis, we integrated geovisualizations to illustrate patterns of mobility among PSTs. Geovisualization is an umbrella term that describes the integration of many approaches of visualizing and analyzing data, including cartographic and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) methods (MacEachren & Kraak, 2001). This analysis drew from the origin and destination data. For example, one article in the sample by Marx and Pray (2011) involved PSTs from the United States (origin) traveling to Mexico (destination) to participate in a study abroad program. All origins and destinations were tallied to create world maps illustrating the concentrations of these program locations. In some cases, publications profiled a program with multiple origins and/or destinations. For example, in Ma, Wong, and Lam (2015), students from Lithuania, Poland, and Turkey traveled to Germany, resulting in three unique origins and three tallies for Germany as a destination. In other cases, multiple publications described the same study abroad program. For example, both Malewski and Phillion (2009) and Malewski, Sharma, and Phillion (2012) analyzed a study abroad program originating in the United States

and traveling to Honduras. This example resulted in two tallies for both the United States and Honduras because each publication was counted separately. Finally, we aggregated trips at the country level because not all publications reported the specific destination within a country.

To address our first research objective—understanding the geographic patterns in study abroad of PSTs—a map was created in ArcGIS 10.5.1 using data from two sources: (1) global data with country boundaries from the Natural Earth website (<https://www.naturalearth-data.com>) and (2) destinations of study abroad programs reflected in the literature reviewed. We selected the Winkel II world map projection to minimize distortions in the map that have traditionally emphasized the size and placement of Europe over other regions (Harley, 1989). Each destination was tallied in order to identify countries with higher and lower concentrations of study abroad programs. The two data sources were converted to map layers in ArcGIS to illustrate spatial relationships between the sources. The resulting map provides a visual representation of the destinations using a 5-point color gradient (green) to indicate the concentration of programs gleaned from the tallies of the published literature.

To investigate our second and third research objectives—examining the topics, conceptual frames, and implementation of study abroad of PSTs, and exploring how study abroad for PSTs is conceptualized and studied—we drew upon the programmatic data we compiled and organized in our spreadsheet. For the second objective, this included program duration, model (e.g., faculty-led), program purpose, and activities PSTs engaged in. For the third objective, this included information on study methods, samples, conceptual frameworks, findings, and stated implications. This information was summarized and presented in

the form of tables, figures, and analytic descriptions with examples to provide descriptive results. We then applied our theoretical framework to this programmatic data to provide a postcolonial analysis.

To explore our fourth research objective—critically analyzing how these geographic patterns and programmatic and research trends are situated within broader North-South relations—additional maps were created. We generated two maps using country boundaries from the Natural Earth website in conjunction with the Matplotlib package (<https://matplotlib.org/>) for the Python programming language. The purpose of these maps was to illustrate travel pattern directionality between the origin and destination countries in the literature. To facilitate interpretation, multiple panels were created to illustrate travel patterns within and across the North and South. Arrows were used to indicate the directionality of each trip's country of origin and its corresponding destination.

Findings

In this section, we present results related to geographic patterns, program design, and research on study abroad. We close the findings section with dedicated analysis of our findings through a postcolonial lens.

Geographic Patterns in Study Abroad for PSTs

The most popular study abroad locations, as reflected in this literature, were in Europe and Central America. **Figure 1** illustrates the country destinations for study abroad programs as reported in each publication. A total of five countries—Mexico, Honduras, Australia, England, and Germany—hosted more than three study abroad programs and in **Figure 1** are shaded in darkest green. Four countries hosted two or three programs (medium green), and 20

countries hosted one program (lightest green). The countries with no shading did not host a study abroad program in the publications selected for the literature review. Only one article (Kasmer & Billings, 2017) reported on a trip to a country in Africa (Tanzania).

In an additional component of our analysis, we examined how these geographies and mobility patterns are situated within the North and the South. For this analysis, we separated the trips into those involving travel from the North to the North (N-N), from the North to the South (N-S), from the South to the North (S-N), and from the South to the South (S-S). **Figure 2** presents this analysis, depicting the travel patterns and their directionality between origin-destination pairs of the study abroad programs represented in the literature. Since not all studies reported the specific location within a country, only the center of the country was used as an origin or destination. **Figure 2** is divided into four panels to represent travel patterns between the North and South. **Appendix B, Table 4**, offers additional details to aid interpretation of **Figures 1** and **2**; specifically, this table lists articles in the sample, countries of origin and destination, and how we coded them as North or South.

We find that the majority of study abroad programs originate in the North, such as North America. The concentration of arrows in the top two panels (N-N and N-S) reveals the predominance of U.S.-origin trips within this article sample. Many programs originating in the United States (North) had destinations in Europe (North) and Latin America (South). Trips to North America were less frequent. As shown in the bottom panels, South-North (e.g., Malaysia-New Zealand) and South-South (e.g., Hong Kong-China) study abroad programs were relatively rare. Many trips originating from the South began in Hong Kong.²

Study Abroad Programs

Beyond study abroad origins and destinations, we were interested in how study abroad for PSTs is being developed and conducted. The duration of the study abroad programs ranged widely from 10 days to two years. **Table 1** summarizes the durations of the study abroad programs for PSTs in weeks. We found that 22% (n = 11) of the programs were short-term (2 weeks or fewer), 43% (n = 21) were medium-term (3-4 weeks), and 35% (n = 17) were long-term (more than 4 weeks).

Table 1: Duration of Study Abroad Programs

Duration (in weeks)	n	%
2 or fewer	11	22.4
3-4	21	42.9
More than 4	17	34.7

Note: Two articles described multiple programs (Dunn, Dotson, Cross, Kesner, & Lundahl, 2014; Trilokekar & Kukar, 2011), and each program’s duration is tallied separately. One article did not specify the duration and is not included in the table (Northcote, Kilgour, Reynaud, & Fitzsimmons, 2014).

Regarding the variety of program activities for PSTs studying abroad, few programs (10%, n = 7) involved a homestay with a local family. The most frequent program activities were an internship or student instruction component (31%, n = 21) as well as a training or immersion component in the local language and/or culture (37%, n = 25). Classroom observations, which were moderately common (22%, n = 15), were often combined with a teaching component, though in other cases they were a stand-alone activity. **Table 2** summarizes the frequency of the various program activities that we observed across the articles.

Table 2: Study Abroad Program Activities

Activity	n	%
Homestay with a local family	7	10.3
Classroom observations	15	22.1
Internship/student instruction	21	30.9
Language/cultural training or immersion	25	36.8

Note: Programs may be included in more than one category. Three articles did not specify program activities (Foster, Rice, Foster, & Barrick, 2014; ; Ma, Wong, & Lam, 2015; Macalister, 2016).

In **Table 3**, we report on study abroad purposes. While trip purposes varied, in more than one-third of cases, study abroad for PSTs was driven by an aim we coded as “fostering intercultural competence and/or skills to work with diverse students.” Within this category, four articles reported on a trip where the designers of the study abroad program had a specific population of diverse students in mind (Beckman & Christenson, 2016; Menard-Warwick & Palmer, 2012; Nero, 2009; Palmer & Menard-Warwick, 2012). In each of these articles, U.S. PSTs traveled to nearby Spanish-speaking countries to gain exposure to English language learners or specific regions from where immigrants were traveling. For instance, Nero (2009) reported on a study abroad trip to the Dominican Republic for both pre- and in-service teachers. This trip was developed in order to “enhance understanding of their (teachers’) immigrant students’ culture with a view to transform such an experience into culturally responsive pedagogy” (p. 175). Nero, the author of the article, was also the trip leader and conducted this trip with teachers from New York City, writing that the Dominican Republic was “a

logical overseas site given that New York is home to almost one million Dominicans, the largest immigrant group in the city’s schools” (p. 176). This trip is one example of a program where the purpose and the destination are clearly explicated. Another example of a program with an explicit goal is a study abroad trip to Mexico which was designed to “facilitate preservice teachers’ ability to articulate a critical understanding of the needs of immigrant and second language learning students in their future public school classrooms” (Palmer & Menard-Warwick, 2012, p. 17). Other trips were similarly driven by the aim of fostering intercultural competence and/or skills to work with diverse students, but their rationale is less linked to specific student populations. For instance, Greene and Vazquez-Montilla (2013) discuss a trip that took U.S. PSTs to Hungary with the aim of supporting PSTs’ abilities to work “within a culturally and linguistically diverse environment” (p. 120).

Additional purposes include developing language skills and/or language pedagogy, gaining teaching experience (through international student teaching), or considering multiple perspectives in teaching. For the last category, one example came from a trip in which Collins and Geste (2016) described U.S. PSTs travelling to Australia: “The hope was that this experience would allow the PSTs to expand their understanding of how others view ‘best practices’ and bring that fresh understanding back to North Carolina classrooms.” (p. 15). An additional purpose for PST study abroad trips that appeared in five articles was to develop globally- minded educators. On a trip to Sweden, Dunn, Dotson, Cross, Kesner, and Lundahl (2014) describe a goal of global-mindedness; PSTs had “an opportunity to gain a broader knowledge of languages, cultures and institutions” (p. 288).

Table 3: The Reported Purpose of Study Abroad Trips for PSTs

Trip purpose	<i>n</i>	%
Fostering intercultural competence and/or skills to work with diverse students	20	38.4
Developing language skills and/or language pedagogy	7	13.5
Gaining teaching experience	7	13.5
Considering multiple perspectives in teaching	5	9.8
Becoming globally-minded educators	5	9.8
Learning about cultures	4	7.7
Other	4	7.7

Research on Study Abroad Programs

Many articles about study abroad programs for PSTs were written by faculty who also served as leaders for the trip; of the 47 studies reviewed, 35 (74%) were written by faculty leaders. This arrangement has many advantages. Given their unique role, faculty leaders are well-positioned to access large amounts of data about these PSTs; in several instances researchers used email communication, course assignments, direct observations, and student journals as part of their dataset. For example, in an article about

a study abroad that took U.S. PSTs to Xingdu, China, Zhao, Meyers, and Meyers (2009) noted that they leveraged application essays, semi-structured interviews, journal entries, classroom teaching videotapes, class projects, student presentations, email correspondence, and classroom observation. Other articles written by faculty leaders used similar data, oftentimes also including leader notes from participant observation (e.g., Beckman & Christenson, 2016; Kasun & Saavedra, 2016; Sharma, Rahatzad, & Phillion, 2013; Thomas, 2006).

Beyond having access to a robust dataset, the unique position for faculty researchers as trip leaders enables grounded reflections on program design. In one article, which involved a group of students from a Texas university traveling to Mexico, Menard-Warwick and Palmer (2012) analyzed eight student journal entries about the same event. The event involved a discussion between PSTs and a mother in a low-income neighborhood about the challenges of sending her four children to school. “The opportunity to speak with a woman who has struggled to keep her four children studying against all odds was intended to rupture...deficit viewpoints” (p. 135), the authors write. However, in their journal entries, most of the PSTs on the trip did not connect this experience with students they may have in the future, with only one PST writing about how this would challenge her as a teacher to consider student home background. Menard-Warwick and Palmer admit to being disappointed, and in their discussion urge teacher educators to structure adequate time for reflection in study abroad programs. They explain that “in a short-term study abroad program, the temptation is to fill students’ time with classes, homework, cultural events, trips, museum visits, and guest lectures. However, learning experiences are only valuable when students have time to fully reflect on them” (p. 135).

Perhaps because many of these articles are written by and for teacher educators, their focus is decidedly on how study abroad impacts PSTs. We did not encounter any articles that devoted significant attention to the impact study abroad has on communities, schools, or individuals with whom PSTs interact during study abroad. Researchers of volunteering abroad have argued that host community relationships are of crucial importance to the efficacy and sustainability of programs abroad (e.g., Tiessen, 2018). Furthermore, examining dynamics with hosts can enable “mutually beneficial relations” between the South and North (Chen, 2019, p. 283). This line of inquiry was, however, not well-represented in the PST study abroad literature surveyed in this review.

As noted in the purpose of study abroad section (see **Table 3**), most study abroad programs aimed to enhance PST competence in some way. Relatedly, researchers of PST study abroad predominantly investigated the extent to which this was occurring. Several studies employed transformative learning theory, pioneered by Mezirow (1978; 1991; 1997), as their conceptual framework (Dunn, Dotson, Cross, Kesner, & Lundahl, 2014; Foster, Rice, Foster, & Barrick, 2014; Trilokekar & Kukar, 2011; Vatalaro, Szente, & Levin, 2015). These studies examined how individuals encountered and appropriated new ideas and adapted their senses of self. Other studies engaged interpretive frameworks to understand how PSTs made meaning of their study abroad experiences (Green & Vazquez-Montilla, 2013; Phillion, Malewski, & Sharma, 2009; Sharma, Rahatzad, & Phillion, 2013).

The majority of articles utilized primarily qualitative data to deeply explore PST experiences during a single study abroad program. One exception is a study that examined several iterations of the same program (Sharma, Phillion, & Malewski, 2011). Another

article stands out for its comparison of a study abroad experience to a domestic classroom learning experience. In a piece titled “ESL Teacher Education Abroad and at Home: A Cautionary Tale,” Pray and Marx (2010) compared changes in attitudes and beliefs among two groups of PSTs. One group enrolled in an ESL class domestically and another enrolled in an ESL class that was offered as a part of a study abroad to Mexico. Pray and Marx concluded that the study abroad version of the course facilitated the development of empathy for language learners, but since the PSTs generalized from their own recent and personal experience of language learning it resulted in misconceptions of language pedagogy.

This analysis also revealed that some study abroad programs are particularly well-researched. This was the most striking with one Honduras trip which represented more than 10% of our article sample. Six of the 47 articles examined a different aspect of the same PST study abroad to Honduras, though often different years of the trip (Malewski, Sharma, & Phillion, 2012; Malewski & Phillion, 2009; Phillion, Malewski, & Sharma, 2009; Rahatzad, Sasser, Phillion, Karimi, Deng, & Akiyama, 2013; Sharma, Phillion, & Malewski, 2011; Sharma, Rahatzad, & Phillion, 2013). This highlights the need for a broader base of scholarship about study abroad for PSTs.

Postcolonial Analysis

The previous sections’ presentation of descriptive results on PST study abroad enables a critical examination of study abroad patterns through a postcolonial framework. In this section, we investigate how these PST study abroad program and research patterns reflect, trouble, and reinforce colonial power dynamics between the North and the South.

The most resounding geographic pattern we observed in this literature base was that

programs predominantly involved PSTs from universities in the North. Of the 47 publications we reviewed, 42 (or 89%) reported on trips for PSTs from the North. While many of these 42 trips were to destinations in the North, a slight majority (23 trips of the 42) involved travel to regions in the South. The preponderance of trips for students from universities in the North can be understood within a broader context of wealth concentrated in regions in the North. Study abroad is a costly activity, and its availability and access are invariably linked to wealth at both institutional and individual levels.

A one-directional flow of individuals from the North participating in programs in the South has been well-established in ISL literature and is mirrored in this literature review (e.g., Tiessen, 2012; 2018). However, we found that some PST programs were designed to help PSTs better understand and support specific populations they encounter in their teaching--such as Dominican students in New York City (e.g. Nero, 2009). This aspect of PST study abroad complicates a strict one-directional flow of benefit through introducing an idea that participants may travel to the South in order to develop needed language and cultural skills and experience which will in turn help them better serve Spanish-speaking immigrant students back in the home context of the North.

In our literature review, we also came across a handful of studies profiling trips from the South. The five articles we coded as originating from the South involved the following origins and destinations: PSTs from Hong Kong traveling to the destinations of Australia, Canada, Mainland China, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom (Hepple, 2012; Ma, Wong, & Lam, 2015; Tam 2016); PSTs from Malaysia traveling to New Zealand (Macalister, 2016), and PSTs from Turkey traveling to Germany (Pfungsthorn & Czura, 2017). Interestingly, the study abroad purposes reported in each of these

articles involved developing language skills and pedagogy. The one South-South study abroad we encountered, Tam (2016), involved PSTs from Hong Kong traveling to mainland China (Beijing) for eight weeks in order to gain proficiency in the language of Putonghua. Hepple (2012) described a trip that emphasized language pedagogy for Hong Kong PSTs traveling to Australia; the study abroad programs discussed in Ma, Wong, and Lam (2015) involved Hong Kong PSTs traveling to English-speaking destinations in order to develop language skills and pedagogy. The program described in Macalister (2016) involved Malaysian PSTs residing for two years in New Zealand in order to build language skills, and Pfingsthorn and Czura (2017) described a program where Turkish PSTs—future teachers of English—attended a language institute in Germany in order to build English language and teaching skills. In short, the majority of the South-originating trips were driven by the goal of learning English and learning how to teach it. While these trips are designed to serve goals of teacher education programs in the South, it is worth highlighting that they serve to confer the importance of English, a language of the North.

While the base of literature on the trips to the South is scant, specific regions had no trips reported on in the literature. Specifically, we did not identify any trips with PSTs from Central America, South America, or Africa. What this scholarship (and dearth of scholarship) also reveals is that much of the information generated about PST study abroad reflects the experiences of North students, though this specification is rarely indicated in the literature. This invisible hegemony has been pointed out in other areas relevant for scholars of teacher education. For instance, in a critical review of literature on teaching, Weber (2007) argues that current scholarship “amounts to a Northern conceptual framework about teaching” (p. 294),

calling for more studies to examine the needs, goals, and constraints of teachers in the South.

Though we saw few trips involving PSTs from the South, 23 of the publications reviewed reported on trips to destinations in the South. The majority of these articles—19—involved PSTs from universities in the United States. We identified a number of practices which could reinforce Ogden’s notion of the “colonial student.” Such a student is situated within an “infrastructure which supports the privileged position of the student over the local” (p. 40). The majority of trips were less than one month in duration, which limits opportunities for immersion. Only seven programs involved homestay with local families. These short and insulated programs can perpetuate a distance between students and those they encounter in study abroad.

Additionally, we were surprised that many studies did not justify their choice of location and made little or no mention of power differentials between students and host communities. In one article (Ward, Henschel Heidi, & Perez, 2017), the specific location of the study abroad is never mentioned. Another publication (Northcote, Kilgour, Reynaud, & Fitzsimmons, 2014), reports on a trip where PSTs from Australia traveled to Cambodia where they taught classrooms. However, instead of forging partnerships with Cambodian teachers, the local teachers surrendered their classrooms to the Australian teachers for several weeks. Whether this arrangement is beneficial to local students and schools was unexplored in this article, as were the tradeoffs around displacing—rather than engaging with and learning from—local systems.

Other studies presented on programs that maximized immersion experiences, even in short timeframes. Beckman and Christenson (2016) described a two-week study abroad in La Secoya, El Salvador with U.S. PSTs. El Salvador was

selected due to the growing population of Salvadoran immigrants near the university with whom PSTs engaged. During their two weeks in El Salvador, PSTs lived with families, designed and carried out service learning activities, and participated in group reflection discussions. Before the trip, PSTs were assigned readings on El Salvador history and education systems. The authors of the article about this trip found that “students overwhelmingly reported that the trip made them more comfortable working with Latino children and families and more sensitive to the issues they faced” (p. 158). Beckman and Christenson found the homestay especially meaningful for many students, writing that, “Living with families in an economically impoverished community also made many of the students reflect on their conception of poverty as well as on issues of fairness and justice” (p. 162).

In addition to offering a promising study abroad model, this trip to El Salvador represents a variety of programs we came across where PSTs traveled to specific locations in the South in order to enhance their capacity to support students from these locations. Such a program design is particularly useful in disrupting global power dynamics because it encourages PSTs to build empathy for and greater awareness of subjugated populations—what Mahler (2017) calls “economic Souths in the geographic North” (para. 2).

Another promising element of study abroad programs involves close engagement with local teachers. In one article about U.S. PSTs studying abroad for four weeks in Xingdu, China, the American PSTs partnered with Chinese teachers. The authors reflected on the unique experience of four participants who had an arrangement where they shared an office with Chinese teachers and lived in the homes of Chinese teachers (they were at the “Charter School”). Comparing these PSTs’ experiences to PSTs who had a less immersive arrangement (at the “Lab

School”), Zhao, Meyers, and Meyers (2009) wrote that,

[t]his combination of factors seemed to create a richer and perhaps more comfortable experience regarding collaboration among American pre-service teachers and Chinese teachers at the Charter School when compared to the experiences of participants working at the Lab School. The Lab School’s six American participants had large class sizes, their own separate office and home stays with non-teachers. The Charter School group communicated and collaborated more frequently with their Chinese colleagues in many aspects in and out of school. They were seen designing lessons, sharing teaching ideas and reflecting upon their teaching with Chinese colleagues more often. They shared ideas that were more student- and small group-centered, and they learned from their fellow Chinese teachers creative and effective teaching strategies that emphasized whole-group participation in learning a foreign language...On the other hand, participants at the Lab School collaborated more amongst themselves (pp. 310-311).

We offer the Zhao, Meyers, and Meyers (2009) and Beckman and Christenson (2016) programs as two promising examples of study abroad programs designed to enhance engagement between PSTs and local populations. We argue that programs along these lines can most effectively invite students to reflect upon global power differentials and complexities. In contrast, programs that ignore these complexities run the risk of reinforcing and further reinscribing inequalities.

Summary of Findings

In summary, the vast majority of trips (n = 42) originate in the North (such as North America) and take PSTs to destinations in Europe or Central America. The study abroad programs range in length from 10 days to two

years, with 3-4 weeks as the most common duration (n = 21). The purpose of study abroad for PSTs most commonly involves fostering intercultural competence and/or skills to work with diverse students (n = 20). Oftentimes, the goals of cultivating language skills (n = 7) and pedagogy (n = 7) also animated trip aims. With respect to research about study abroad, we find that the majority of the articles were written by faculty who served as trip leaders (n = 35). This arrangement facilitated access to robust datasets and enabled grounded reflections on program design, but also introduced possibilities of bias and power that were rarely explored.

Our analysis also revealed that trips originating from the South are most commonly driven by the goal of learning English (n = 5). We also raise questions about local student relations that are promoted through existing models of PST study abroad, and highlight articles by Zhao, Meyers, and Meyers (2009) and Beckman and Christenson (2016) for offering promising study abroad models for PSTs.

Conclusion and Discussion

Our review of 47 articles about study abroad for PSTs leads to several implications for research and program design, which are offered in the following sections.

Implications for Program Design

We were pleasantly surprised to find that the majority of programs (78%) represented in the research literature were three or more weeks in duration. Of these longer trips, the modal duration was four weeks. To achieve the most commonly stated programmatic aim of fostering intercultural competence and/or skills to work with diverse students, we feel that it is important for PSTs to spend more than two weeks in the destination country. While the programs lasting two weeks or fewer do provide PSTs with some

experience in another geographic and cultural context, we feel that their ability to meet their desired aims is limited and recommend that program leaders try to maximize program duration to the greatest extent possible given logistical and financial constraints. Additionally, maximizing engagement through immersion activities can enable richer study abroad experiences.

We were disappointed to find that homestay activities were not very common across the programs. In light of the most commonly stated programmatic aim of fostering intercultural competence and/or skills to work with diverse students, we feel that having an immersive cultural experience via homestays would promote PSTs' intercultural competence and encourage program leaders to incorporate homestays when designing programs. On the other hand, it was encouraging to see a moderate number of programs including language/culture immersion or training activities, which nicely aligns with the goal of fostering intercultural competence. Likewise, seeing a moderate number of programs involving internship or student instruction opportunities was positive to help realize the aim of building PSTs' skills to work with diverse students. Having those types of immersive hands-on practice activities can create powerful learning opportunities that PSTs can apply to their future careers. Those designing study abroad programs can turn to promising program models identified in this literature review (e.g., Zhao, Meyers, & Meyers, 2009 and Beckman & Christenson, 2016) that effectively invited students to reflect upon global power differentials and complexities.

The findings of this literature review suggest that study abroad is disproportionately available to PSTs in the North. Additionally, the large individual costs of study abroad in general has historically meant that study abroad is more accessible to affluent students (Norton, 2008).

The cost of study abroad creates sizeable barriers in access, and thus we echo others' calls for domestically oriented immersion experiences (Dunn, Dotson, Cross, Kesner, & Lundahl, 2014). Recent scholarship on virtual reality also provides intriguing possibilities for leveraging new technologies to promote global connections and competencies. For example, web-based computer simulations like the one studied by Myers and Rivero (2019) was designed to enhance PSTs' global content knowledge, disciplinary skills, and instructional practices, and could be used anywhere there is an Internet connection. While study abroad is an exciting and powerful modality for promoting global and intercultural competency, we urge that it be well-justified given its exclusionary and costly nature.

Implications for Research

We assert above that domestically oriented immersion experiences may be well-suited for achieving the goals that drive many study abroad programs, and that domestic programming may be more accessible to a wider array of PSTs. Relatedly, we call for research to compare study abroad with these domestic experiences to systematically examine the unique contributions of study abroad in promoting the aims of building global/intercultural competency, developing language skills and pedagogy, and other purposes outlined in this literature review. One existing study which did compare study abroad and domestic programming (Pray & Marx, 2010) identified that study abroad can lead to misconceptions about language learning, which underscores our call for more research comparing study abroad to domestic programming.

Another aspect we wish to submit for consideration among scholars of study abroad is the importance of faculty leaders reflecting on their positionality in both leading study abroad

trips and leveraging these trips for data. With some exceptions (e.g., Nero, 2009), we found that faculty leader authors rarely acknowledged the limitations and power relations entailed in researching one's students. Issues of authority may surface in other studies of programs, though these issues have yet to be well-explored. We encourage future trip leaders to acknowledge and consider their specific positionality in writing about their students' study abroad experiences.

Additionally, future literature reviews adopting a postcolonial framework could systematically include non-English language journals. Given our language abilities, we limited our search to journals published in English. Our study thus did not report on research published in non-English journals, which may include studies from the South.

The dominance of particular voices in the literature—namely, English-speaking faculty writing about PST experiences—also reveals that other perspectives are absent. While this literature base features a plethora of trips to different locations, we learn very little from this scholarship about local community perspectives of study abroad experiences. Student journal entries are included (as curated and interpreted by researchers), but we do not see PSTs crafting articles about study abroad. Future research could incorporate this need to learn about study abroad from different perspectives.

In closing, our postcolonial review of scholarship on the study abroad of PSTs not only encourages a broadening of perspectives and experiences as represented in the literature, but also as reflected in practice. Continued attention paid to global power differentials is needed in program design and research on the availability of study abroad opportunities to PSTs in the South and in program activities designed to promote intercultural and global competency.

Figure 1

Destinations for PST study abroad programs

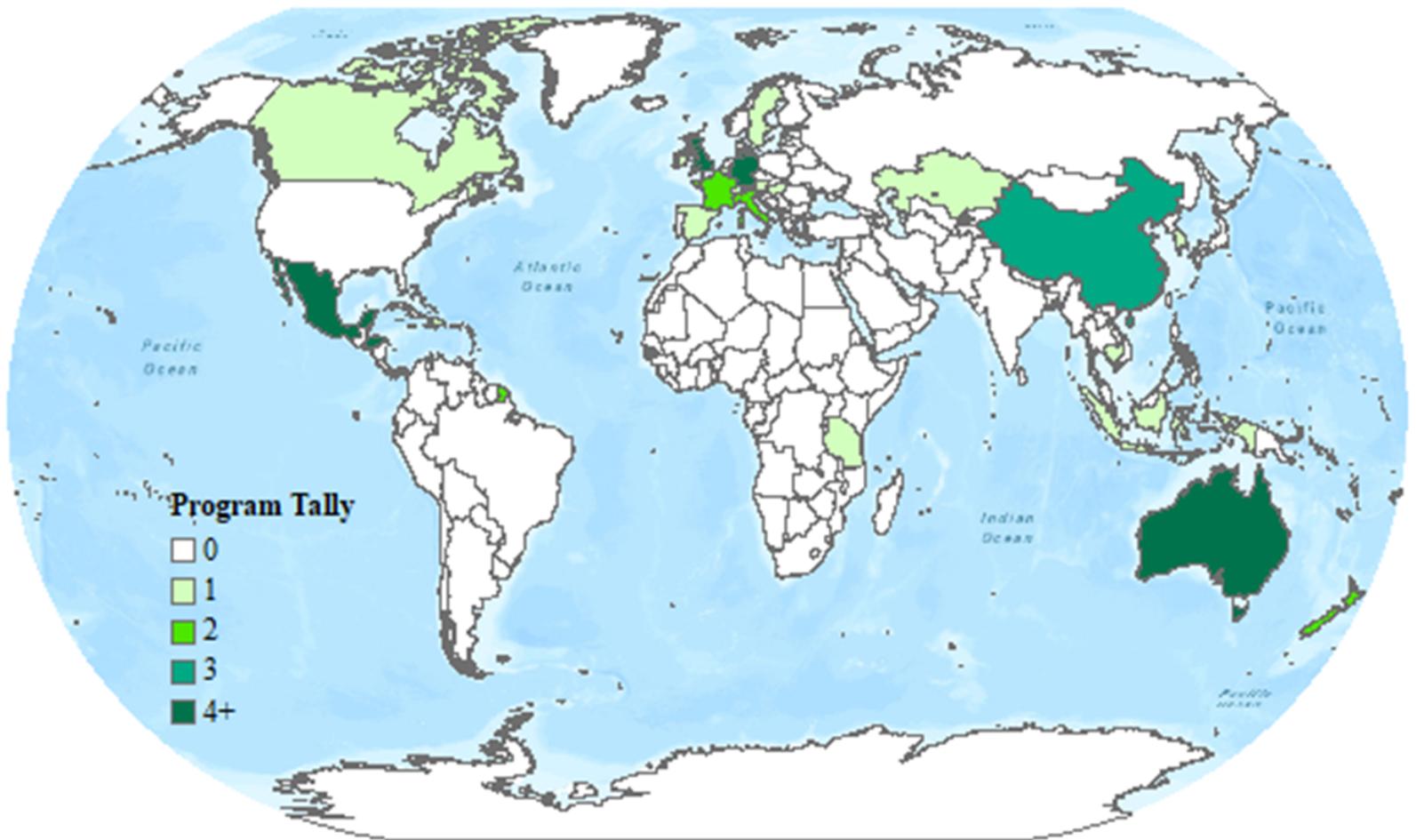
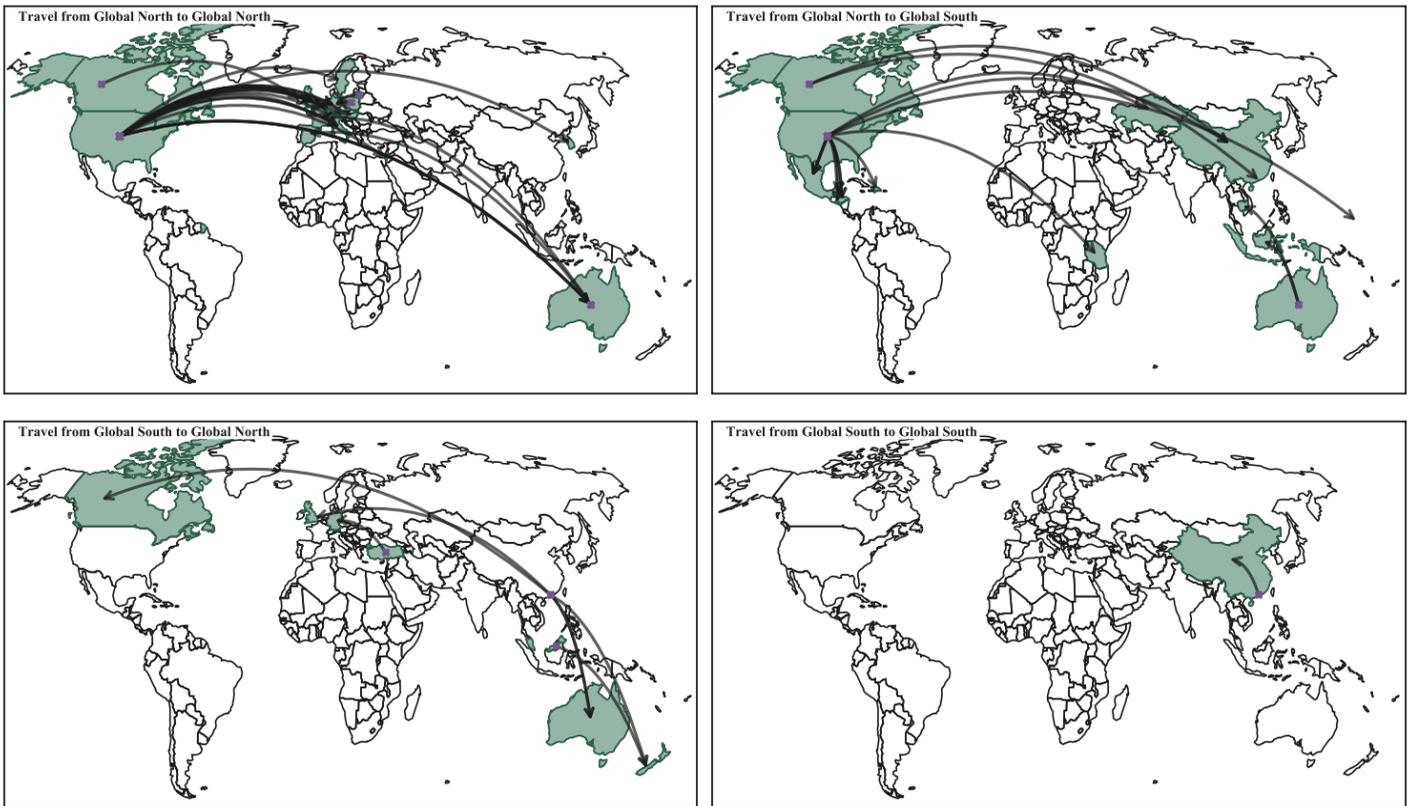


Figure 2

Travel patterns and their directionality between origin-destination pairs of study abroad programs



Appendix A

Search Process

Database Review (Level 1): *N* = 86

Databases¹: Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ), ERIC, Sociological Abstracts, PsycINFO

ab(("study abroad") OR ("education abroad") OR ("learning abroad") OR ("study tour") OR ("school trip") OR ("foreign study") OR ("student travel")) AND ab(("future teacher") OR ("future teachers") OR ("teacher candidate") OR ("teacher candidates") OR ("pre-service teacher") OR ("pre-service teachers") OR ("preservice teacher") OR ("preservice teachers") OR ("teachers in training") OR ("teacher in training") OR ("teacher education") OR ("future educator") OR ("future educators") OR ("pre-service educator") OR ("pre-service educators") OR ("student teacher") OR ("student teachers") OR ("education intern") OR ("education interns")) AND la.exact("English") AND PEER(yes) ==86

Abstract Review (Level 2): *N* = 47

Abstracts were reviewed and articles were retained that met each of these four criteria:

1. Empirical study
2. Focuses on K-12 PSTs
3. Non-redundant in the sample
4. Focuses on study abroad program(s)

¹ Three databases were searched using ProQuest (ERIC, Sociological Abstracts, and PsycINFO). The Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ) was searched manually.

Appendix B

Articles in Sample

Table 4 *Articles in Sample with Geographic Information*

Author(s) and Year of Publication	Country of Origin	Global Origin	Destination Country	Global Destination
Beckman & Christenson (2016)	U.S.	North	El Salvador	South
Brindley et al. (2009)	U.S.	North	England	North
Chacko & Lin (2015)	U.S.	North	England	North
Collins & Geste (2016)	U.S.	North	Australia	North
Dozier & Stephens (2016)	U.S.	North	Belize	South
Dunn et al. (2014)	U.S.	North	Sweden and France	North
Foster et al. (2014)	U.S.	North	South Korea	South
Green & Vazquez-Montilla (2013)	U.S.	North	Hungary	North
Hepple (2012)	Hong Kong	South	Australia	North
Hill & Thomas (2005)	Australia	North	Indonesia	South
Kasmer & Billings (2017)	U.S.	North	Tanzania	South
Kasun & Saavedra (2016)	U.S.	North	Mexico	South
Hare Landa et al. (2017)	U.S.	North	Israel	North
Lupi et al. (2012)	U.S.	North	England	North
Ma et al. (2015)	Hong Kong	South	United Kingdom, New Zealand, Australia, Canada	North

Macalister (2016)	Malaysia	South	New Zealand	North
Malewski & Phillion (2009)	U.S.	North	Honduras	South
Malewski et al. (2012)	U.S.	North	Honduras	South
Marciano et al. (2017)	U.S.	North	Italy	North
Marcus & Moss (2015)	U.S.	North	England	North
Marx & Moss (2011)	U.S.	North	England	North
Marx & Moss (2015)	U.S.	North	England	North
Marx & Pray (2011)	U.S.	North	Mexico	South
Matthews & Lawley (2011)	U.S.	North	Australia	North
McGaha & Linder (2012)	U.S.	North	Belgium	North
Medina et al. (2015)	U.S.	North	Germany	North
Menard-Warwick & Palmer (2012)	U.S.	North	Mexico	South
Nero (2009)	U.S.	North	Dominican Republic	South
Northcote et al. (2014)- case 1 of a study abroad	Australia	South	Spain and France	North
Northcote et al. (2014)- case 2 of a study abroad	Australia	South	Cambodia	South
Palmer & Menard-Warwick (2012)	U.S.	North	Mexico	South
Pfingsthorn & Czura (2017)	Lithuania	North	Germany	North
Phillion et al. (2009)	U.S.	North	Honduras	South

Pilonieta et al. (2017)	U.S.	North	Germany	North
Pray & Marx (2010)	U.S.	North	Mexico	South
Quinn et al. (2011)	U.S.	North	England	North
Rahatzad et al. (2013)	U.S.	North	Honduras	South
Salmona et al. (2015)	U.S.	North	Australia	North
Schneider & Parker (2013)	U.S.	North	England	North
Sharma et al. (2011)	U.S.	North	Honduras	South
Sharma et al. (2013)	U.S.	North	Honduras	South
Shiveley & Misco (2015)	U.S.	North	Multiple European Countries	North
Tam (2016)	Hong Kong	South	Mainland China	South
Thomas (2006)	U.S.	North	Republic of Kazakhstan	South
Trilokekar & Kukar (2011)	Canada	North	Luxembourg, Austria, and Switzerland	North
Vatalaro et al. (2015)	U.S.	North	Italy	North
Ward et al. (2017)	U.S.	North	Pacific Islands	South
Zhao et al. (2009)	U.S.	North	China	South

Notes

1 There are exceptions to these broad regional categories which are primarily characterized by a nation's income level. For example, Australia is located within the Oceania region but is commonly considered to be part of the North.

2 In some classifications, Hong Kong and Turkey are labelled as the North; applying this scheme would result in only one of the 47 publications reporting on a trip from the South.

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