

Where do I click to raise my hand? An interpretative phenomenological analysis of the university students' experience studying abroad during the 2020 pandemic

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Where do I Click to Raise my Hand? An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis of the University Students' Experience Studying Abroad During the 2020 Pandemic

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BACKGROUND

Traditional Study Abroad programs are meant to be life-changing and allow for the appreciation of real-world experiences that foster global citizenship. (Perry et al. 2012) The unprecedented 2020 global pandemic changed the trajectory of international student mobility programming for the unforeseeable future. International students were forced to transition to online and hybrid programs or forgo the opportunity to pursue cultural and credit bearing interests and experiences abroad.

This research attempts to explore the lived experiences of 14 university students as they navigated their journeys of switching from traditional education abroad to digital learning. Some participants were able to have the opportunity of experiencing the traditional education abroad process as degree seekers or exchange students, while other participants purely online during this process.

METHODOLOGY

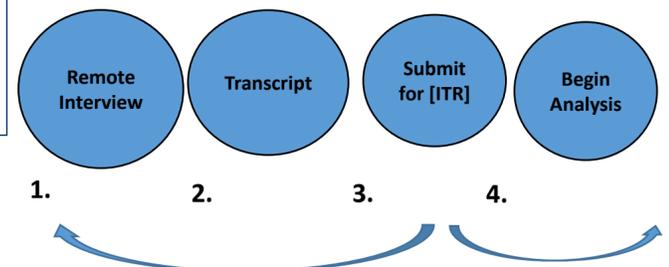
RESEARCH DESIGN:

- Qualitative semi-structured phenomenological remote interviews over a 5-month period in the Spring and Summer of 2021
- Audio and Video Recordings transcribed through Microsoft TEAM using STREAM
- Transcriptions were sent to the individual participants. This process is referred to as **Interview Transcript Review (ITR)** process which validated the interviews.

DATA ANALYSIS:

Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA)

Interview Transcript Review Process (ITR)

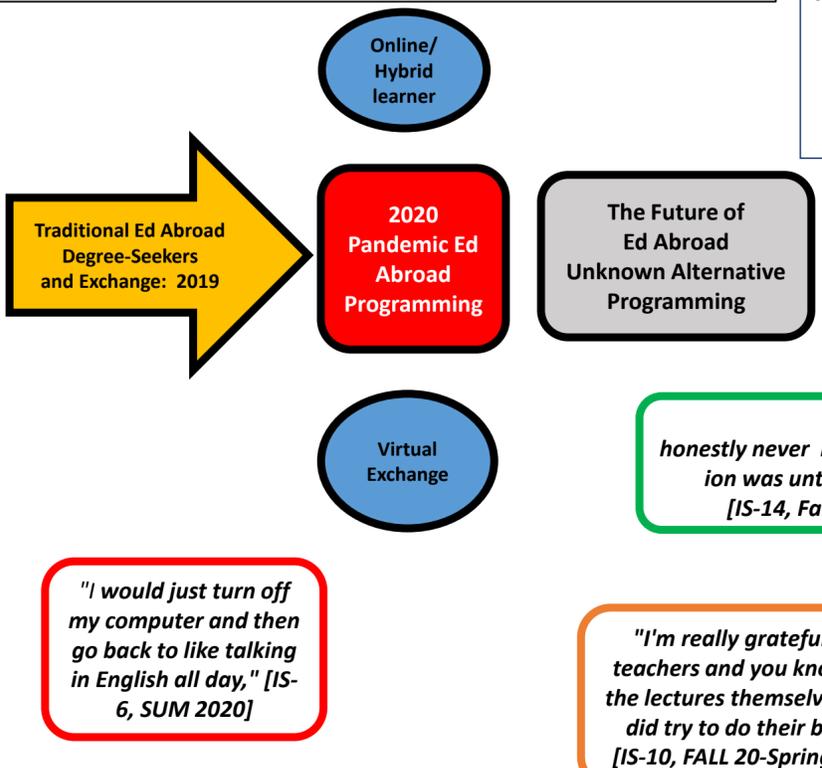


RESEARCH QUESTION

What are the lived experiences of university students' who transitioned to virtual learning, on International Programs during the 2020 Pandemic?

RESEARCH AIM

- to contribute to the dialogue concerning university students' motivations to study abroad
- to understand their lived experiences as they navigated their transition to exchange and hybrid programs virtually, during the 2020 global Coronavirus Pandemic.



"I honestly never knew what procrastination was until covid happened."
[IS-14, Fall 19 -Spring 2020]

"I am visually white, but because I'm not British they didn't identify me as white."
[IS-5, FALL 19 -SUMMER 2020]

"You can really detach yourself from concentrating on the module. You can eat your lunch, or you can sleep, or you can talk on your phone..."
IS-4, Fall 19 - SUM 2020

"I would just turn off my computer and then go back to like talking in English all day," [IS-6, SUM 2020]

"I'm really grateful that teachers and you know, like the lectures themselves, they did try to do their best."
[IS-10, FALL 20-Spring 2021]

"I wanted to learn Korean so bad that I wasn't going to turn down the online session because it's just like a personal goal, like a career goal."
[IS-13, SUM 2020]

FINDINGS

[N=14] Apart from 3 participants, all students were taught in English speaking programs however, English was an additional language for 9 of the participants. 5 Students participated in Exchange Programs and 9 Students participated in Degree Seeking programs during Fall 2019 – Spring 2021.

Self-Determined (SDT) - Resiliency, "...people will be intrinsically motivated only for activities that hold interest for them..." (Ryan & Deci, 2000). During the pandemic travel programs seemed more time-consuming and added a layer of disappointment. Amotivation Motivation – Extrinsic Motivation- Intrinsic Motivation – Shift in motivational focus [1, 2, 6, 7]

Experiential Learning (ELT) - People learn best through positive and negative experiences which can be determined by participants culture background – Collectivist vs. Individualistic [2, 3, 4]

Cultural Intelligence (CO) - Levels of connectivity and adaptability – A halt of traditional Informal connections were necessary per social distancing rules to keep people safe however, it also provided for limited online connections which left participants lacking in cultural and intergroup adaptation practices [1, 2, 4, 5]

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