

## **Motivation of Learning in Alternative Study Abroad Destination: A Case Study of Study Tour Program in the Philippines**

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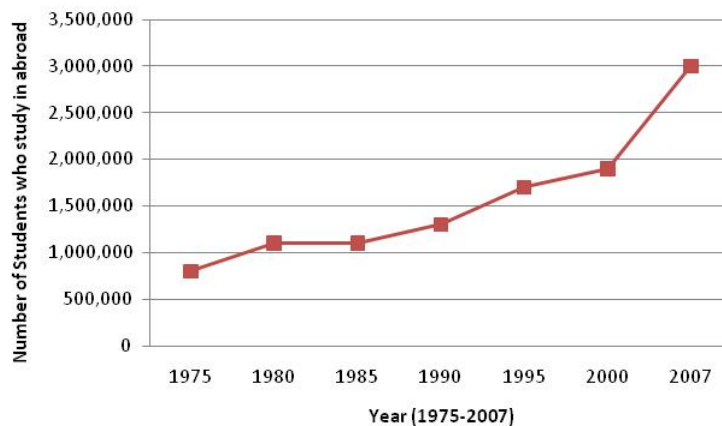
*Currently, the number of students who participate in Study Abroad Programs is growing. The purposes of most Study Abroad Programs is to involve students in language learning and cultural studies situations. To realize these purposes, some programs are held not only in developed countries but also in developing countries. This study focuses on how a student, who participated in a Study Tour to the Philippines, transformed her knowledge and images through the program, and became motivated to study abroad in alternative destinations. As a result, there were transformed knowledge and construction of new knowledge from before her participation. The role of facilitators and characteristics of the Filipino, such as their hospitality, were important in motivating her to go to the Philippines.*

**Keywords:** study tour, study abroad destination, learning through experiences, motivation, cultural exchange

## **Introduction**

### **Promotion of various Study Abroad Programs, and its assignments**

In this era of globalization, there is much interaction among international partners. These society need internationally-competent workers, who are versed in foreign languages and who have mastered basic inter-cultural skills needed to successfully interact with international partners (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2009). Presently, Study Abroad (SA) programs, that are expected to educate these students, are increasing. Figure 1 shows long term growth in the number of students enrolled outside of their country of citizenship (OECD, 2009).



**Figure 1.** Long term growth in the number of students enrolled outside their country of citizenship.  
 OECD (2009) *Education at a glance 2009*: OECD Indicators.  
 from [www.oecd.org/edu/eag2009/](http://www.oecd.org/edu/eag2009/)

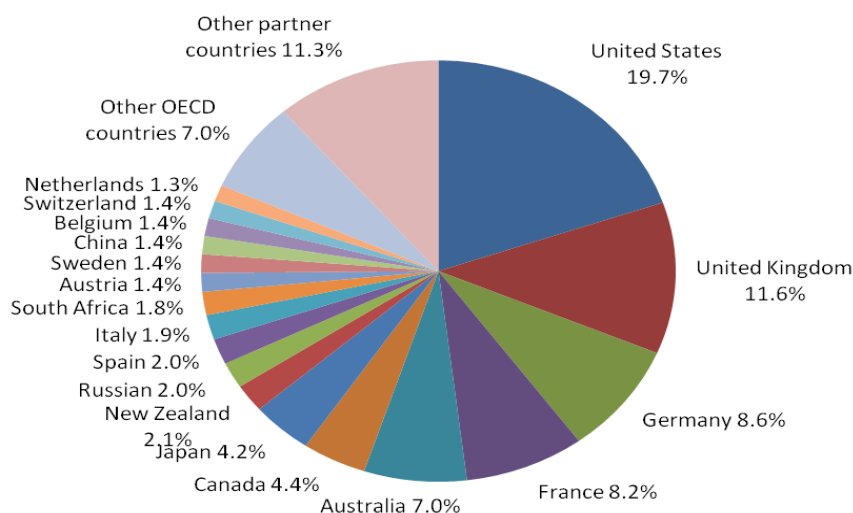
There are various educational objectives of SA programs, mainly Language Instructions, such as learning English, French or German, and acquiring inter-cultural skills while interacting with persons who are living in different cultural environments. To realize these learning objectives, various types of SA programs are available; for example, “academic year/semester program, summer program, intensive language program, internship program and volunteer program (Studyabroad.com, n.d.)”, to a variety of destinations not only in developed countries but also developing countries. Thus, learners are able to select the program and destination suitable for their learning objectives.

SA program, in developed countries, usually select traditional destinations, such as the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, French, Australia, etc. and focused mainly on language instruction. Universities, colleges, language school or other organizations provide language lectures for the students. These students have opportunities to learn a language that they want to master from native speakers during their sojourn.

On the other hand, SA programs in developing countries focused on the ‘Experiential Learning’ situations. According to Minoura (1996), educators in these countries embraced it. The developing countries are expected to provide experiential learning environments that are new and unfamiliar to the SA student (Kaul, Kaul, & Schukoske 2006). Students participate in service learning activities that provide teaching and learning strategies to increase knowledge and to contribute to society through volunteer work. (Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport, Science and Technology: MEXT 2008). The students, who participated in Service Learning, are expected to learn through these activities. The students join various activities provided by NGO/NPO, Christian churches, and other organizations and foundations (Yamamoto & Kubota 2010). These programs generally exist in the U.S. (Wassel 2007: MEXT 2008), and are spreading to Japanese universities.

Although the perception of the purpose of SA programs in developing countries is expanding

among various educational sectors (Kudo 2009), students predominantly selected developed countries as destinations for their SA programs, rather than developing countries. Figure 2 indicates the distribution of foreign students in tertiary education, by country of education (OECD 2009).



**Figure 2.** *Distribution of foreign students in tertiary education, by country of education.*  
 OECD (2009) *Education at a glance 2009: OECD Indicators.*  
 from [www.oecd.org/edu/eag2009/](http://www.oecd.org/edu/eag2009/)

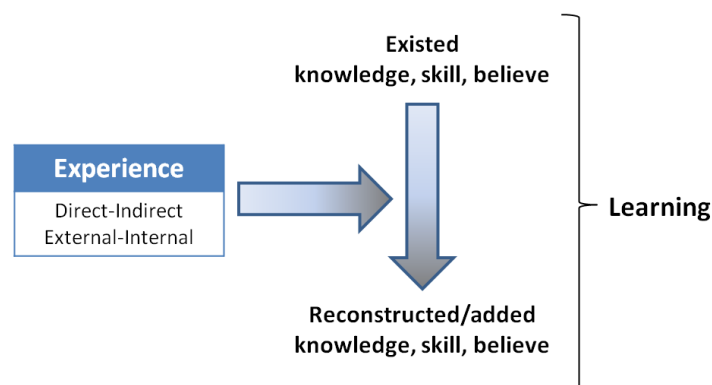
Morishima & Yamamoto (2010) investigated the images about the Philippines as a SA destination for 196 undergraduate students who were planning to study abroad. Student opinions revealed 35.3% negative images about the Philippines (e.g. dangerous place, poverty, poor hygiene, problem of garbage/dump site, etc.), 10.4% positive images (e.g. kindly character, cheerful character, etc.) and 54.2% indeterminable images (e.g. banana, developing country, hot, etc.) According to this result, some students had negative images about the Philippines, which may influence their selection of SA destinations.

Thus SA students limit their learning opportunities by their biases about developing countries, and thereby miss the chance to learn in alternative environments. Therefore, the purpose of this research is to find a strategy to understand the value of learning and the changes that occurred in a student's negative perceptions about developing countries. This case study is based on a study tour program in the Philippines, South East Asia, provided by Faculty of Foreign Language Study (FFLS), Kansai University, Japan.

### **Design of the Case Study: Learning through Experiences**

The design of this case study focused on the use of Learning through Experiences to understand the value of learning and the changes of negative perceptions about developing countries. Learning through Experience is meaningful for knowledge building and encouragement to study. Matsuo (2006) defined experience as that "interaction between person and environment." Furthermore, Matsuo stated that learning cannot be separated from experience. According to

Matsuo (2006), learning means ‘transforming of knowledge/skill’, on the other hand, experience means “interaction between the learner and the outside world to transform his/her knowledge/skill.” Figure 3 shows this relationship between experience and learning. This transformation is considered learning (Matsuo, 2006).



**Figure 3.** *Relationship between experience and learning*  
Matsuo (2006) *Learning from experience*, p. 61

Previous studies reveal that the learner builds and reconstructs knowledge, skills and beliefs through various experiences, and indicate the importance of the interaction with people and environments in different cultures. For example, Kudo (2007) reveals learning outcomes of Japanese university students who studied abroad for a short period of time. The study shows that, the students who participated in the program resolved their biases and understood the host culture through their interactions with people living there.

Yokobayashi (2002) mentions the importance of SA students to interact with people in the host country for their acculturation to a new environment. Acculturation is the process in which foreign student or immigrants can lead a life without any cultural conflicts and keep relationships harmoniously with others from different cultures (Yokobayashi, 2002). Yokobayashi (2002) cites the case of a SA student who aspired to study in English-speaking countries but was assigned to Japan. Therefore, the motivation to study in Japan was not high, and there was no incentive to acculturate into Japanese society. However, the SA student progressed through the acculturation process with social support from various Japanese. For example, a Japanese family offered support that helped with the acculturation process. The SA student obtained new knowledge and changed perceptions about Japan and the Japanese. Moreover, the student was encouraged to study actively about Japanese culture.

Most potential students have biases towards developing countries, and these beliefs affect the selection of their destination of SA programs. To alter their perceptions, the authors designed learning opportunity based on experiences that included interaction between the students with people and environments in different culture. Experience is important for learning, especially for knowledge construction and transformation. Therefore in this research, we designed a case study based on various experiential activities, and will reveal how the participant’s knowledge

and images were constructed or reconstructed, and how a participant can be motivated through this learning opportunity.

## **Method**

The authors selected the student for analysis. The student had these characteristics, 1) negative perceptions for developing countries, 2) no images of how the student can learn in developing countries, 3) aspiration to go the United States for SA for future. The authors though we can find transformation of perception through the student's learning process, we selected the student as a case study.

To gather data, the authors reviewed a reflection paper and a journal. The reflection paper is a description written after the program. Students reviewed their images before and after their Study Tour experiences. The journal is based on written findings during the program. At the beginning of the program, the authors gave a notebook to each participant in the program, and requested that they write about all things that they experienced, such as notions, impressions, reflections, opportunities, situations, tools, transportation, etc.

To analyze the data, the authors applied Qualitative Data Analysis (Flick, 1998: Denzin & Lincon, 2000: Kubota, 2000: Minoura, 2009). First, the authors coded the reflection paper and the journal. Second, we classified the data, and found ideas about pre-images, post-images, factors for the knowledge construction/transformation and motivation for learning in the Philippines, a developing country. We would like to discuss how experiential activities during the study tour affected the student's images, knowledge and beliefs.

## **A Case Study: Study Tour in the Philippines, Kansai University**

### **Visions and SA program of the FFLS**

Established in 2009, the FFLS's vision is to develop English/Chinese teachers who have higher skills of foreign language communication, and to develop leaders who have high leadership and who are able to act in various fields and places (Kansai University, Faculty of Foreign Language Studies). In order to develop students, the faculties provide educational programs, including SA programs.

Eight students participated in the program. All were first-year, female students. This was the first time for the four of them to travel abroad.

The objectives of this program are (1) to comprehend the meaning and value of learning English in the Philippines, (2) to experience learning abroad by living in another culture, (3) to obtain knowledge concerning the Philippines, such as social systems, culture, weather, religion, educational standard, etc. This program was held from the 8th of August to 16th of August. The Study Tour in the Philippines is expected to provide various learning situations to students, not only negative ones, such as social problems but also positive ones. The participants were to

learn about social problems and global issues in the developing countries, especially about the gap in the income of the rich and poor and environmental pollutions, through field visits and providing snacks to children at the NGO in the Philippines. The participants had numerous opportunities for cultural exchange and conversation with Filipinos in English. The participants join various activities during the program. Table 1 shows the schedule of the program.

**Table 1.** *The schedule of the Study Tour of FFLS*

Date	Location			Activities
Aug. 8. 2009	Manila	City,	Metro	-Departure from Japan and arrival in the Philippine -Field tour of downtown Manila City -Streets, park, mall, bay walk, etc.
Aug. 9	City of Malolos, Bulacan			-Transfer to City of Malolos, Bulacan
Aug. 10	City of Malolos, Bulacan			-Exchange with BSU students -Exchange with elementary school pupils -‘Origami’ instruction and Dance
Aug. 11	City of Malolos, Bulacan			-Exchange with BSU students
Aug. 12	City of Malolos, Bulacan			-Field tour of the Bajau community in Pampanga (next to Bulacan) -Exchange with university students
Aug. 13	City of Malolos, Bulacan			-Field tour at city of Malolos
Aug. 14	City of Malolos, Bulacan			-Providing snacks to children -Exchange with BSU students
Aug. 15	Makati	City,	Metro	-Transfer to Metro Manila -Field tour at newly-developed urban area of Makati City
Aug. 16	Manila	City,	Metro	-Departure from the Philippines and arrival in Japan

## Field tour

### *Downtown of Manila City*

In the downtown of the Manila City, there are various findings of typical social issues, such as people living in the streets, beggars, pollutions, clutters, noises, etc. On the other hand, inside of shopping malls, there are famous brand stores, many restaurants, toys, computers, electric devices, grocery stores, and so on. The participants find a differential between the rich and poor through the field tour of downtown of Manila City. Some of them know about these situations of urban area in developing countries from news broadcasts, books, and the Internet (WWW). However, through these experiences, the participants are able to understand, and consider the social issues in the world, especially in developing countries.

### *Newly-developed urban area of Makati City*

Makati City is the newly-developed urban area of Metro Manila, and the richest area in the Philippines. Central Makati City has many embassies, central branch or branch of companies, large shopping malls, foreign-affiliated hotels, etc. On the streets of Makati City, people are not able to find the view like downtown of Manila City. Makati City is located next to Manila City, a distance of approximately 20 minutes by train. While visiting Makati City, participants could discover the development of the Philippines, and the gap between the richer and poor.

#### *City of Malolos, Bulacan*

City of Malolos, Province of Bulacan is located approximately 42 km north of Metro Manila, and is developing as a neighboring town. There are many upper class income earners, however, in several locations, they could find social issues of developing countries. Around BSU is the central area of Province of Bulacan. BSU, provincial hospital, police station, library, museum, etc. are built centering on the provincial hall.

In the downtown of City of Malolos, there are various historical places and places for ordinary people, such as public markets and churches. Public markets include dry markets (fruits and vegetables), wet markets (meats and fishes), clothes shops and stores for daily necessities. The participants could understand the cultures and customs, and had opportunities to adapt to society of the Philippines.

#### *Bajau community in Panpanga*

Bajau ethnic group is the maritime people in Borneo (Malaysia and Indonesia) and Mindanao (Philippines). They are known as 'sea gypsies' and boat dwellers. The Bajau ethnic groups are without ancestral lands to live on. Bajau community members in Panpanga, next to Bulacan, were forced to migrate to Luzon as illegal settlers in order to escape poverty and social oppression in Western Mindanao, the Philippines (God's Love for the Indigents Ministry Inc., n.d.).

In Province of Pampanga, Philippines, there is an NGO, for supporting community members, called GLIM (God's Love for the Indigents Ministry Inc). GLIM provides various services to the Bajau ethnic people., for example, scholarship programs for primary and secondary year children, vocational training for adults, feeding program, preschool education, health care education, etc. In addition, they are incorporating an American Peace Corps member into the program. The SA participants are expected to know about the situations of the Philippine's, multiethnic society, discriminations, squatters, and so on.

### **Cultural exchange at an elementary school and a university**

The Study Tour participants had two kinds of cultural exchange opportunities during the program. Through the exchanges, the participants enjoyed communicating with others using English and understood the importance of English communication skills and level of English in the Philippines. The following explain the exchange in more detail.

#### *Santisima Trinidad Elementary School, City of Malolos, Bulacan*

The purposes of this exchange were to decrease the hurdles to communicate in English by communicating with children. In this activity, the Study Tour participants enjoyed the communicating with elementary school pupils. They taught children how to make "Origami", a Japanese paper-folding craft and showed Japanese traditional dance. The Study Tour participants had opportunities to understand characteristics of Filipinos.

#### *Bulacan State University*

To understand level of English in the university, the cultural exchange program with BSU students were set during the Study Tour. In the Philippines, Japanese culture, mainly cartoons,

animations, music and pop idols, are spreading to young generations by TV and the Internet. Therefore Filipino university students are interested in Japanese people and their culture, and some students are learning Japanese in various universities. Also, BSU students are interested in Japanese culture. Although the topic of exchange was familiar with the Study Tour participants, they could not communicate with Filipino students for their low English level. They recognized that English level in the Philippines is high.

### **Providing snack to children**

*NGO (Life Improvement Network for Grassroots Assistance and Progress: LINGAP)*

LINGAP is the NGO, created to empower women and provide educational assistance to out-of-school and low-income household, preschool children. Every Saturday or Sunday, LINGAP provides literacy classes and feeding program to children. The Study Tour participants taught Japanese plays and provided Japanese snacks to the children. By communicating with the children, the Study Tour participants got the opportunities to consider about social issues and supports for the low-income household children.

### **Unanticipated Events**

During their stay in the Philippines, the participants had various incidental experiences. They met many social issues such as homeless people, street children and beggars in several places. They had opportunities to understand social issues and negative sides of the Philippines. These were triggers for them to consider social issues.

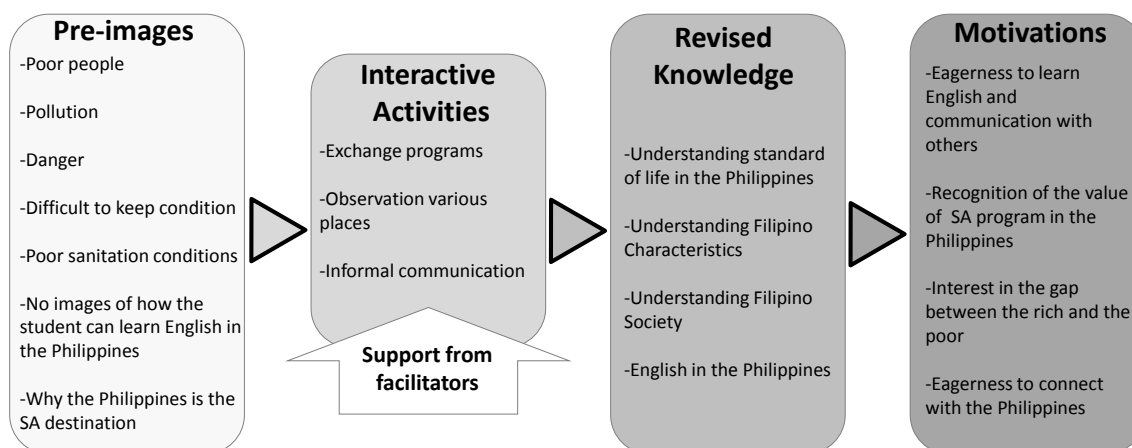
### **Reflection Meetings**

Every day after the program, the participants had meetings, facilitated by coordinators, to reflect on their daily activities. The students shared their impressions, feelings, opinions, questions, etc, and the coordinators gave comments, advice and new viewpoints to them. The participants noted their finding from these meetings, into a notebook, and record their learning processes.

## **Results and Discussion**

As a result, the process of transformation of perception was revealed from comparison of pre-images and revised knowledge through the Study Tour. The student constructed and reconstructed her knowledge, and transform perception about the Philippines. Moreover, the student was motivated to learn in the Philippines through this opportunity (figure 3.)

Before participating in this Study Tour, the student had many negative perceptions based on biases and anxieties to go there. For example, poor people, pollution, danger, difficult to keep healthy, poor sanitation conditions, no images of how she can learn English in the Philippines and why the Philippines is the SA destination. Therefore, she was not interested in the SA program in the Philippines. A reason why the student participated this Study Tour was for overseas exposure before attending a required SA program during following year and because she had never visited abroad.



**Figure 3.** *The images transformation processes of images through activities, and student's motivation on the Study Tour in the Philippines*

During the Study Tour, the student had many opportunities to communicate in English through various exchanges. From these activities, experiential learning situation, the student revised her knowledge and beliefs.

### **Understanding Standard of life in the Philippines**

Before visiting the Philippines, the student imagined encountering many difficulties about staying in the Philippine, such as the dormitory and Filipino foods. However, she did not encounter difficulties in the dormitory or with daily meals. The student dormitory was clean and because rice is a staple in the Filipino diet, the student easily became accustomed to meals. Thus, the student's anxieties about the daily life were removed.

### **Understanding Filipino Characteristics**

In the exchange with university students, the student enjoyed conversation and dance with them. Filipino students listened attentively to the poor English of Japanese, and the student was impressed with their attitude. After the exchange programs, the student felt great hospitality from them, and constructed images about the Filipino characteristics such as hospitality, kindness, etc.

### **Understanding Filipino Society**

The student had opportunities to understand Filipino society through field tours during the Study Tour, and she changed her perceptions. There were field tours to downtown of Manila City and newly-developed urban area of Makati City. In their field tour of the downtown, she met many street children and beggars. In contrast, in newly-developed urban area, the student was surprised to see developed area because she had anticipated poverty and pollution. Through the experience, the student understood the situation of the Philippines, and changed her perceptions.

## **English in the Philippines**

The student did not have images that English is spoken in the Philippines, however, that perception was transformed by communication with Filipinos during her stay. The student had opportunities to communicate with Filipinos in English at several places, such as primary schools, universities, even supermarkets and fast food shops. English is spoken widely in the Philippines. Thus, the student recognized that it was possible to learn English in the Philippines.

Before participating in the Study Tour, the student did not understand the value of the SA program in the Philippines, and did not have incentives to go there. However, the student transformed her perceptions through experiential learning opportunity, and she was interested in learning in the Philippines.

The following describes changes in the student's motivation.

### **Eagerness to learn English and communication with others**

The student was motivated to communicate with others in English because she found the enjoyment in English communication through exchange activities with Filipinos. The Filipino students listened attentively to her poor English, therefore she acquired confidence in speaking English with others.

### **Recognition of the value of SA program in the Philippines**

The student discovered the value of the SA program in the Philippines through “the kindness of Filipinos that suited learner's English skill.” The student had many opportunities to interact with Filipinos, and understood their characteristics. She recognized that it is one of the values of the SA in the Philippines for English learning.

### **Interest in the gap between the rich and the poor**

In the program, the participants met social issue, especially street children or beggars, during field tour, shopping, walking, etc. The student was shocked by this social issue, and she questioned why a gap occurred (or existed) between the rich and the poor. This interest became motivation to learn about the gap in the Philippines.

### **Eagerness to connect with the Philippines**

From the experiences in the Philippines, the student appreciated everyone who communicated with her and wanted to return their kindness. During her stay there, the student communicated with Filipinos passively because her English skill was not so high. However, she received much kindness from them and learned about the Philippines. After the Study Tour, she thought she wanted to return to the Philippines, and repay the the courtesy to her friends there.

## **Conclusion and Future Perspective**

The student transformed her perception from negative to positive, and was motivated to study in the Philippines through the Study Tour. To design this type of Study Tour, “The facilitators for the participants” and “Findings characteristics of host culture based on interactions” are important as key factors. The facilitators were a graduate student and an undergraduate student who designed and coordinated this program. During the Study Tour, the facilitators worked to reduce the stress and anxieties of participants. In addition, facilitators also shared their knowledge or experiences about Filipino philosophy, beliefs, characteristics, etc. Moreover, they asked the participants for opinions and impressions about the Philippines, and urged reflection about their experiences. The student described in the reflection paper that ‘If I visited the Philippine alone, this tour must had been a TOUR (not a learning opportunities).’ The student learned more about life in a developing country because of the support from facilitators. This program became a learning situation based on her experiences.

On the other hand, too much support can prevent the Study Tour participants from becoming self-reliant. According to the description in her journal, the student felt ‘the participants enjoyed and had a sense of achievement when they moved around without coordinators’, however, she had ‘no confidence in living in the Philippines without help from the facilitators.’ The authors have to consider this process and intervention when supporting the participants.

This program was designed with many interactions with elementary school and university students. Moreover, the participants had various opportunities to communicate in English at the airport, in town, and even at supermarkets. They found cultural characteristics such as hospitality and kindness, and could understand through interacting with Filipinos. In SA program in English-speaking countries, there are some case studies about Japanese students being discouraged to learn because of cultural differences (Tanaka, 2007; Abe, 2009, Kudo, 2009). In these cases, Japanese students were prevented from interacting with the community. The cultural understanding based on interacting with host country people is important to motivate the student.

Finally, the student who was targeted in this research decided to study abroad in the United States, not in the Philippines in 2010. Although she considered studying in the Philippines after participation of the Study Tour, her family discouraged her from going to the Philippines and expressed their desire for her to study in the United States. This case study indicated how a student can be motivated to study in a developing country, however, this did not become a factor in deciding on future study abroad programs. As a future perspective, the authors will continue to examine what factors influence students to study in developing countries.<sup>3</sup>

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