

The International Student Attitude Scale

Julia Shaftel, Ph.D., Center for Educational Testing
and Evaluation, University of Kansas

jshaftel@ku.edu

Tim Shaftel, Ph.D., School of Business

University of Kansas

tshaftel@ku.edu

Scale Development

- Initially developed in summer 2003
- Field test of original form (50 items) in 2003-2004
- Revised scale (35 items) used from 2007 to present
- Study abroad students (n= 573 undergrads) from 30 US universities assessed from summer 2007 through fall 2009 in Italy
- Control students (n=1102 undergraduates) assessed at 5 US universities from spring through fall 2009
- 400 control and study abroad students also completed the Cross-Cultural Adaptability Inventory (CCAI, Kelley & Meyers, 1995) and the Six Factor Personality Questionnaire (SFPQ, Jackson, Paunonen, & Tremblay, 2000)

ISAS Factors

- New Experiences: adventurousness, willingness to try new things
- Open-Mindedness: openness to diversity, curiosity about different cultures and points of view
- Self-Confidence: confidence in social situations, risk-taking
- Stress Management: ability to handle challenges and difficult situations
- International Careers: interest in and desire for an international career
- Foreign Language: interest in and desire for studying a foreign language

Scale Validity

- Open-Mindedness correlates with Flexibility-Openness and Perceptual Acuity on the CCAI (Kelley & Meyers, 1995).
- Open-Mindedness correlates with the Big Five factor of Openness to Experience (SFPQ, Jackson, Paunonen, & Tremblay, 2000).
- International Careers correlates with Openness to Experience.
- Stress Management correlates with Emotional Resilience on the CCAI.
- Self-Confidence correlates with Emotional Resilience on the CCAI and the Big Five factor of Extraversion.
- Foreign Language and New Experiences were not measured on other scales.

Current Sample

- Control group of undergrads (mostly US business students) was 60% male.
- Study abroad group of undergrads (mostly US business students) was 39% male.
- Reliability (alpha coefficient) is .91.
- Study abroad group was significantly more likely to have previous travel experience outside their native country.
- Study abroad group was significantly more likely to have international career plans.

Sex Differences

- Females score higher on Open-Mindedness, New Experiences, and Foreign Language.
- Males score higher on Self-Confidence and Stress Management.
- Foreign Language shows an interaction effect with group: men who study abroad are more interested in foreign language study than men who stay home; women do not differ by group.
- There are no sex differences for International Careers.

Summer/Semester Differences

- Study abroad students in both semester and summer terms scored significantly higher than control students on all factors except Self-Confidence.
- The group by term interaction was significant for International Careers, Open-Mindedness, and Foreign Language.
 - Summer control students scored higher than semester control students.
 - Summer study abroad students scored lower than semester study abroad students.

Differences by Previous Travel

- Sex by previous travel interaction was significant for Stress Management:
 - Men who had not traveled outside of their native country rated themselves higher on Stress Management than men who had previously traveled internationally.
 - Women who had not traveled outside of their native country rated themselves lower on Stress Management than women who had traveled previously.
- Previous travel caused men to lower their Stress Management ratings but caused women to raise their Stress Management ratings.

Previous Travel and Term

- Semester students rated themselves higher on International Careers and Open-Mindedness if they had traveled previously.
- Summer students' ratings on these factors did not differ by whether they had traveled previously or not.
- Students who had previously traveled abroad rated themselves significantly higher on all factors except Stress Management.
- For International Careers and Foreign Language, the control group differed more on the basis of previous travel than the study abroad group did.

Conclusions

- Study abroad is very attractive to women; more women than men choose to study abroad.
- Women score higher than men on Open-Mindedness, Foreign Language, and New Experiences.
- Study abroad students score higher than controls on all factors except Self-Confidence.
- Summer study abroad students don't score as high as semester students, suggesting they select a shorter term because they aren't prepared to spend four months in an international setting.
- Previous travel had similar but less powerful effects: Students who had traveled previously outside of their native countries scored higher on all factors except Stress Management.
- Previous travel made more of a difference for control students than for study abroad students, with control students who had not previously traveled rating themselves lowest on the ISAS.