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Short Term International Study For Teachers As A Form of Experiential Learning: A Case Study of American Educators in Turkey

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SHORT TERM INTERNATIONAL STUDY FOR TEACHERS AS A FORM OF
EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING: A CASE STUDY OF AMERICAN EDUCATORS IN
TURKEY

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He is grateful to his,

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation is a case study of the experiences and perspectives of nine US teachers who participated in a short-term international study tour to Turkey, from the theoretical perspectives of global education and experiential learning. It examines how that experience shaped the teachers' understandings of global dynamics, cultural differences and experiential learning. It also sought to understand how teachers incorporated what they learned from their international experience into their subsequent educational activities. This study has implications for teachers and professionals who are considering short-term international study in order to enhance their global perspectives and their approaches to providing global education for their students.

Keywords: global education, experiential learning, personal and professional learning, short-term international study tour.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Teachers are expected to address global issues in today's diverse classrooms. Participating in short or long term study abroad experiences seems like a promising approach for teachers to develop a more global perspective. The literature in global education and experiential learning provides supports for the idea that teachers should immerse themselves in other cultures for these purposes.

Research indicates that international education exchange programs can increase teachers' use of effective global education practices (Wilson, 1984; Garii, 2009; Schlein, 2009; Biraimah & Jotia, 2012; Zimmerman, 2006). Research in global education and experiential learning recognizes the numerous positive effects of teachers' short term international educational experiences (Mahan, 1990; Orndorff, 1998; Kambutu & Nganga, 2008; Palmer & Menard-Warwick 2012; Willard-Holt, 2001). Gaining new knowledge and expanding world-views through participation in cross-cultural programs has been widely acknowledged and studied, but there is still much to learn about how the international experiences of teachers impact their teaching practices.

1.1 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Unfortunately, for practicing teachers, it is rarely feasible to go abroad for long periods. Under these circumstances, it is important to explore whether short-term international study tours provide meaningful experiences that enhance teachers' global

perspectives and practice of global education. Without evidence that well-designed short term experiences abroad are meaningful, it is difficult to justify the expense and the practice.

This dissertation conducts a case study to explore the influence of a short-term international study tour experience on teachers and their teaching practices. Research on global education and experiential learning for teachers pays particular attention to the intercultural encounters they experience while participating in cultural and educational programs abroad. Can they translate their own experiences in meaningful ways into relevant instructional strategies that provide global knowledge and experiences to their students? So far, few studies have attempted to assess how teachers' learning from such international study trips influences both their thinking and practice.

1.2 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the study is to investigate and to understand the personal and professional learning experiences of nine US teachers resulting from a ten day short-term study tour program to Turkey. This study examined the short-term international experiential learning activity of teachers from the theoretical frameworks of global education and experiential learning. The focus for this study was twofold: to understand the influence of the short term international study tour on the participants' understanding of global dynamics, cultural differences and experiential learning; and to examine the ways that teachers incorporated their professional learning from the international experience into their subsequent educational activities.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Under the guidance of the following research questions, this dissertation explores the impact of short-term international educational experiences on a select group of teachers through document analysis and interviews.

- a) How has the short term international study tour influenced the participants' understanding of global dynamics, cultural differences and experiential learning?
- b) How do teachers incorporate what they learned from their international experience into their subsequent educational activities?

1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study contributes to the existing literature in the areas of short-term teachers' trips as a form of developing cross-cultural skills and global competency. The central issue of this study is how the short term international trips carry over to their personal and professional learning and their teaching practices? This research question is particularly concerned with the impact of the design of the trip, pre-trip planning, host culture and post-trip expectations on teachers' educational practices. This study is significant because it contributes new knowledge to the field and demonstrates the value of short-term international trip experiences for teachers' global competency and teaching practices.

1.5 RESEARCH DESIGN

This qualitative study employed a case study research method. It gathered data from documents and interviews. The case study included transcribing and coding the

interviews and organizing the recurrent themes that appear in both the documents and the interviews.

This study analyzed teachers' short term international experiences from the theoretical perspectives of global education and experiential learning. This study has implications for teachers and professionals who seek to expand their knowledge about effective short-term international study tours in order to impact their professional development and teaching practices.

1.6 THE STUDY TOUR

The organizer of the trip aims to promote Turkey by initiating different cultural and educational programs. The organization implemented various programs in different platforms to promote cultural and educational exchanges. It is the organization's aim to bring people from various backgrounds to share moments and create memories. The choice of Turkey as the destination of the study tour is very much aligned with the goals of the organization. The organization believes that Turkey offers a rich historical and social background where diverse groups of people have co-existed for centuries. From this diversity perspective, the trip organizer designated different religious and cultures sights such as mosques, churches, ancient cities, city centers and rural areas for the study tour. To achieve the goal of showing the diversity of the country, along with the current social and political climate, the trip was built on site visits and institutions visits. Because all the participants were social studies teachers and expected to study the current social and cultural climate of the country, a theme-based itinerary approach was constructed by the trip organizer.

An email was sent by the organizer of the trip to the participants for recruiting purposes. In the description of the study tour, the organizer of the trip explained their expectations in organizing the study tour, stating that:

As a participant, you will be able to interact with several of history's major civilizations by visiting some of the world's most beautiful historic and geographic sites, including the Hagia Sophia, the Greco-Roman city of Ephesus, palaces of Ottoman sultans, a boat trip on the Bosphorus Sea, the WWI battle site of Gallipoli (100th anniversary), and much more! Participants will engage in dialogue with Turkish secondary Social Studies/History teachers to gain mutual understandings of the history and culture of each of our countries, as well as, how to discuss with students the current situations and the foreign policies which shape our worlds today.

The study tour sought to give the teachers a program where they could have dynamic cross-cultural experiences in order to expand their knowledge about the social and cultural context of Turkey. Expanding their understanding and knowledge of Turkey through the study tour stands as a critical link for developing lesson plans and teaching their students about the country.

The organizer of the trip expected that the participants:

- a) "Actively participate in thoughtful dialogue with colleagues and the people of Turkey while on our Travel Study in order to increase understanding of Turkey's history, its current economic, geographic and political environment, and aligning new learnings of Turkey to the state Social Studies Standards;

- b) Create a unit of study connecting our State Social Studies standards with information participants will learn and observe from our Travel Study (due no later than 30 days after our return to their home city).”

The purpose of the study tour was to provide personal and professional learning opportunities for the selected teachers. These included site visits, attending formal lectures, interacting with Turkish people, and personal leisure time in the host-country setting. The organizer of the trip also described the study tour,

“As an opportunity for participants to experience the culture of Turkey, including its world famous cuisine, artisan crafts, customs and practices of its inhabitants. In addition, participants will meet fascinating people of one of the most unique countries in the world today, including government officials, historians, local educators, religious leaders, geographers, civic groups which support Turkish democracy and women’s rights, as well as, organizations devoted to alleviating poverty and natural disasters.”

First-hand experiential learning offers a unique opportunity. Closer interactions with a place through the smells, sounds, views and tastes offer opportunities to the participants to observe and learn about the social and cultural context. In the example of Turkey, the participants could see women and men in different Muslim religious dresses, they could smell the different types of Mediterranean food, they could view the ancient sites such as Hagia Sophia and Ephesus, and they could listen to the sound of the call to prayer and people talking in their local languages.

1.7 THE RESEARCH SITE

Here, the researcher provides brief information on the geography, history and culture of Turkey which was the destination of the international study tour for the research participants.

Turkey is a country located mainly in Asia and partially in Europe. It has borders with countries of Greece and Bulgaria to the northwest, Georgia and Armenia to the northeast, Iran to the East, and Syria and Iraq to the southeast of the country. Turkey borders the Mediterranean Sea in the South, the Aegean Sea on the Western shore, and Black Sea across the Northern part of Turkey (Dewdney & Yapp, 2017).

Map 1.1: Map of Turkey (The World Fact-book of CIA, 2017)



According to the World Factbook of the CIA (2017), these figures represent the estimated demographics of Turkey as of July, 2016:

Estimated Population: 80,274,604

Ethnic Diversity: Turkish 70-75%, Kurdish 19%, other minorities 7-12%

Languages: Turkish (official language), Kurdish, and other minority languages

Religions: Muslim 99.8%; Christians, Jews and others 0.2%. (People and Society Section, para.1)

Turkey is a land of civilizations ruled at different times by the Roman Empire, Byzantine Empire and Ottoman Empire. After World War I and the collapse of Ottoman Empire, the Turkish Republic was founded in 1923. The current political system of Turkey is built upon a multiparty, secular and democratic republic which is represented by elected officials. The majority population of Turkey is Muslim with minority groups of Christians and Jewish people. Turkey's ethnic diversity is represented by Turks, Kurds and other minorities. Because Turkey culturally represents different religious and ethnic groups and was home to many civilizations throughout its history, the culture of Turkey is rich and diverse and it is represented by varieties in foods, clothing, music, arts, and languages (Lloyd et al., 2015).

Because Turkey's geographical, historical and cultural situation is so rich, the study tour was an opportunity for the research participants to gain personal and professional knowledge and experience about the country.

1.8 ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

In Chapter 1, the researcher introduces the overall study together with the background, purpose and significance of the study.

In Chapter 2, the researcher reviews the literature in global education and experiential learning that provide the conceptual framework for this study

In Chapter 3, the researcher discusses the methodological approach used in the study. The researcher provides information about the case study, interviews, and document analysis methods as a way of collecting the data. The qualitative data coding and analysis were processed by using a software program, Nvivo 11, which allowed the researcher to code the recurring themes in the verbal and written accounts of the participants.

In Chapter 4, the researcher presents the findings from the perspectives given in global education and experiential learning. The researcher identified three areas as to explore the findings in the research. These are geographical, historical, and cultural learning of the participants.

In Chapter 5, the researcher concludes the research with the discussion of the findings from the perspectives of personal and professional learning of the participants. The research also provides implications for the future studies.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this literature review, the researcher addresses the topics of global education, experiential learning, and short-term international programs, including study abroad programs and short-term study tour programs for teachers. To focus on teachers' short-term study travel programs, the literature review first discusses global education, and then proceeds to experiential learning and to short term international study tour. The concepts that are provided in global education and experiential learning concern the outcomes that can be expected as a result of participating in an international short term program.

First, the researcher takes a chronological approach to the history of global education in order to present the key concepts, practices and ideas in the field that inform this study. Then, the researcher addresses key concepts in experiential learning. Lastly, the researcher draws upon the discussions of global education and experiential learning, and applies them to the topic of short term international study tour.

2.1 GLOBAL EDUCATION FOR TEACHERS

The concept of globalism or internationalism in education has a long history. One of the earliest attempts to understand the dynamics that shape the socio-political environment across borders was conducted by George H. Mead (1929), whose introduction of National Mindedness and International Mindedness is very much affected by the de facto politico-cultural context of the 1920s. In Mead's perspective, National

Mindedness represents looking deeply into the roles of the self and society in constructing the unity of the nation. International Mindedness refers to understanding the dynamics that shape relations between nations. Fischer (2008) critically analyzes Mead's perspective and notes that Mead's description of definitive words is linked to the political climate at the time he was writing. Although the term was used to identify the socio-politics of international settings, international mindedness is now a concept that has become an essential part of understanding schooling across nations (Duckworth, Walker-Levy & Levy, 2005).

Guttek (1993) analyzed national and global socio-political realities and concluded that the dynamics changed rapidly. Although the rapid changes had presented universally shared issues, Guttek (1993) highlighted that a nation's interests and global priorities remained distinct.

The conceptual frameworks for local and global dynamics have been considered by scholars in twentieth and twenty-first century academic studies. Hanvey (1982) is one of the scholars to investigate these dynamics and analyze ways of knowing global concepts such as understanding the interdependent structures of people's perspectives, knowledge of complex world issues, interpretation of existing situations, cultural sensitivity and solutions to global issues. Understanding these concepts is helpful for awareness of other cultures and world dynamics in order to understand how difficult it is to propose solutions to today's challenging problems. Becker (1979) follows a similar line of thought and put emphasis on the interconnectedness of world dynamics, which are politically, socially and economically intertwined.

Following the idea of interconnectedness, Giddens (1990) defined globalization as "the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa" (p. 64). These overlapping dynamics have affected the development of global education movement over the years. In addition to socio-politics of world dynamics, educational, cultural and ethnic perspectives have been redefined in an attempt to better understand emerging global perspectives (Kirkwood, 2001). Anderson (1979) considered this new understanding as incorporating interconnected dynamics to gain a holistic view of what has happened, what is happening and what will happen. He argued that implementing a global education curriculum based on this holistic view would broaden the students' understanding of different perspectives. Furthermore, Anderson (1982) suggested that students need to see the interconnectedness of perspectives and issues in our globalizing world.

Beginning in the 1950s, the need for a comprehensive understanding of global perspectives in educational practices started becoming an important discussion for institutions and individuals. For instance, Faure (1972) noted that the leading consensus for UNESCO was that educational experiences in the sense of cross-national exchanges should be examined. By the same token, Becker (1982) suggested that in order to increase the awareness of global education among educators, there was a need to further dialogues on selected issues and to clearly identify the goals and objectives of global education. As Kobus pointed out (1983), there was a tendency to evaluate implementation and effectiveness of global education programs.

In order to understand the development of global education, it is necessary to consider the socio-political climate of the 1960s. The Civil Rights Movement and the aftermath of Sputnik reshaped academic spheres in educational practices, which caused a reconsideration of local and global dynamics. In this climate, multicultural education was perceived as a way understanding the local needs of schools while global education called individuals to consider the impacts of global tendencies within educational settings. In an attempt to find similarities between global education and multicultural education, Cole (1984) identified the following issues as potentially shared by the educational disciplines. Our lives are constantly affected by our own choices as well as choices made by others, and all of these choices create interrelated situations both locally and globally. Cole (1984) emphasized that students need to be taught certain knowledge and skills to identify the interrelated issues of today and live well with the complex situations of today and tomorrow.

Understanding the concept of diversity creates opportunity to consider dynamics and perspectives that arise in global and local settings as a process of life-long learning (Graves, Dunlop & Torney-Purta, 1984). Alger and Harf (1985) also saw that opportunity in these settings, and he proposed global education as a chance to create lifelong opportunities through observing local dynamics and seeking to understand global issues.

In order to achieve global education goals for students, teachers must be prepared to create appropriate global education opportunities. When the need for understanding and appreciating others was being acknowledged by scholars, Johnston (1993) emphasized the importance of using a systematic academic research approach to understand how global education works in the area of teachers' personal and professional

development. Cushner, McClelland and Safford (1992) proposed that when young people undergo personal development by encountering others, they experience emotional challenges such as anxiety and ambiguity first. Constantly reflecting on cultural and personal differences allows people to overcome challenges when they first encounter them. According to Cushner, McClelland and Safford, it is worthwhile to undergo a journey that blends emotional and intellectual learning to achieve personal growth. In Ramler's (1991) understanding, appreciating other cultures brings forth an awareness of the complex issues of the world; consequently, students will be able to develop the skills necessary to overcome challenges they encounter within the complexity of world matters. For Case (1993), teaching global perspectives is likely to broaden students' understanding of cultural and social identities and their moral perspectives on empathy and cross cultural understanding.

In this context, Social Studies Education functions as a way to convey global and local perspectives. The global education movement challenges Social Studies educators to be prepared to teach global and local perspectives. Kniep (1986) pointed out the interconnectedness of world issues and the lack of global historical context in US world history classrooms. Later, Kniep (1989) stressed the responsibility that social studies educators have to educate their students about the global issues. He identified some key components of social studies education as factors that lead to change or conflict in the interdependent world structures. Social Studies Education teaches the global dynamics in order to prepare students to become effective and participatory citizens to function well in today's diverse world structures.

The global education movement and technological developments give teachers an opportunity to add diversified instructional strategies to their teaching activities. As a practical approach to this development, Pickert (1992) looked at the possible ways to broaden global perspectives and saw newly developing computers and satellite broadcasting as a way of bringing world perspectives to classrooms. As history proceeds, today different technological tools can aid teachers in bringing the knowledge about others to the classrooms. Bruce, Podemski and Anderson (1991) stated that the real-life experiences of current and prospective teachers should navigate the interests of students by using every possible way to experience global perspectives in virtual and daily life.

Tye (1990) on the other hand posits the idea of global education as a social movement and proposes that teaching global dynamics should not be solely attached to the social studies curriculum; it should also encourage the school system to reevaluate behavioral and structural approaches in teaching activities. Later on, Tye and Tye (1992) looked at teachers' professional development and self-skills set as essential ways of changing the school climate to enhance global perspectives. That reflective and personal development approach was also taken into consideration by Merryfield (1993), who found that reflective practices in global education are very much connected to the aspects of knowledge, and personal reflection to deal with the struggles and complex understandings coming with the ideals of global education. Furthermore, Easterly's (1994) approach also represents the underlying theme among the scholars, which is the search for ways to develop both global perspective for teachers and their teaching skills in order to put this understanding into classroom practices.

Global education requires gaining global perspectives, reflective teaching and personal development. The following sections will exhibit ways in which researchers have taken the experiential part of global education more into consideration while using various approaches to provide systematic analysis of such global practices. Experiential education will be placed under a different headline but the following parts offer some underlying and evolving themes in scholars' perception of experiences in global education.

When experiences in others' lands are being investigated, some emotional and social challenges are found in the scholars' analyses. In reality, the challenges were perceived since global education offers some learning opportunities through challenging teachers' own skills. For example, Razzano (1996) highlighted that multicultural and international education programs are expected to broaden the experiences of teachers in content knowledge and field experiences in order to enable potential learning and growth in the understanding of local and global diversities. The diversity in classrooms brings both advantages and challenges and it is important for teachers to learn the ways to make the classroom a place where diversity is handled peacefully.

The fear of the unknown was taken into consideration by McCabe (1994) who observed a group of students who participated in a semester at sea program and concluded that students added new horizons as they were exposed to learning opportunities outside their comfort zone. The fear of the unknown or challenging oneself in others' lands seems quite reasonable because world cultures have distinct ways of perceiving individual and collective rights.

Barber (1995), in his book *Jihad vs. McWorld*, deeply questioned the core values and concepts in different cultures to see distinctions such as individuals' choices versus collective approaches. Wallerstein (1996) analyzed the surrounding socio-political dimensions of global issues through pointing out the interpretation of global citizenship perspectives and placing emphasis on how nations perceive their priority interests. Kelleher and Klein (1999) approached the issue of interconnectedness from a similar fashion through saying that although world nations have different social and political boundaries, globally interconnected issues play vital roles in changing socio-political dynamics. Morrow (2000) approached the issue from critical perspectives and predicted that celebrating global education without having debates across systems can be dramatic since the future might bring unpredictable outcomes from the unchallenged educational activities.

In particular, critical approaches to understanding the complexity and challenges of the global education movement stood out in the analysis of Pike (2000), who stated that there is a need to see ongoing changes in global socio-politics such as the dramatic power losses that happen in nation states, which later affects teachers' understanding of priorities for teaching subjects. Similarly, Avery (2004) found that while American students are aware of their democratic rights, they understand poorly how human issues, power relations, and world politics affect and reshape local and global democratic values. According to Carnoy and Rhoten (2002), overlooking the cultural and socio-political differences of nations may result in the unsuccessful implementation of educational projects adapted through globalization. In this context, global education itself is carried out differently in countries' educational systems. While a nation utilizes the practices of

global education to emphasize humanistic messages such as equality and understanding the differences of each other, another nation might focus on how the people in the specific country share the common ideals (Hicks, 2003).

Both Barber (1995) and Wallerstein (1996) identified the challenge of understanding the interests of the world cultures within local and global settings. For instance, Merryfield (1996) extensively looked at shared contexts in multicultural education and global education and pointed out that both of them focus on the similarities to search for a better understanding of human aspirations and needs. In Ukpokodu's (1999) summary, global education and multicultural education share the notion that students should be equipped with learning so that they become aware of civic, ethic and professional outcomes of their decisions.

With this in mind, in what ways do experiential overseas teaching activities help us understand new ways of looking into the teaching practices in schools? Merryfield (1995) noted that global education activities for teachers happen in traditional or informal learning contexts where they find chances to have individual or collective cross-cultural experiences. For instance, Friesen (1995) examine the experiences of two student teachers as they participated in an international experience and concluded that their experiences would be helpful to see how people from different world cultures can develop mutual respect and cross-cultural understanding through experiences created in a teaching abroad project. Bennet (1995) believes that preservice teachers should be exposed to a collaborative climate in order to develop skills to understand diversity issues.

Merryfield (1995) observed that pre-service teachers who are exposed to cross-cultural perspectives have developed skills such as understanding the importance of providing authentic sources to teach global issues, teaching the subjects in a sense that values the sensitivity, complexity and connectivity of world issues and taking students' diverse backgrounds into consideration. Kissock (1997) found that student teaching overseas helps preservice teachers develop their intercultural skills, the way that they see the dynamics that are shaping school and community relations and their ability to find new ways of relevant teaching methods.

Diversifying the teaching methods and developing self-skills such as empathy and sensitivity are highlighted as two outcomes by Bryan and Sprague (1997) who studied the effects of an overseas teaching internship. According to Clement (2002), student teachers' overseas experience not only develops their intercultural skills but also their professional outlooks for teaching, learning and managing the classroom. In this context, Merryfield (1997) perceived this kind of experiential learning occurring in differentiated cultural settings as one of the core ideals of global education.

Is professional experience alone sufficient to provide global perspectives for teachers' development of self-skills such as cross-cultural communication and diversified teaching methods in the classroom? According to Merryfield (2000), we cannot say so because experience should be perceived within the interrelated context of power that shows us positionality and the choices of individuals; therefore, we need to look at experiences in the realm of the individual, social and cultural boundaries and choices to recognize a variety of perspectives. Even experiences of teachers and knowledge of global issues such as immigration and Islam are expanded; they might avoid teaching

some subjects because their local community and school dynamics can perceive some of these topics as controversial (Tye, 2003). In the pathways of Anderson-Levitt's comparative world culture analysis, teachers are encouraged to see global trends and how they are differently perceived and practiced within local cultures (Anderson-Levitt, 2003). For Stromquist (2002), understanding the power dynamics such as economic and social relations is some of the leading factors of globalization so that such knowledge arises from global experiences within the realm of world economic and social realities. Changes in power dynamics also create international dimensions which affect the isolation, interconnectedness and consuming global knowledge of nations (Stiglitz, 2003).

Herein lies the essential question? How do overseas experiences of teachers affect their understanding of local vs. global dynamics and their teaching practices upon returning from these programs? To give some real-life experiences that show changes in the teachers' understanding of local vs. global dynamics, Mahon and Cushner (2002) found that overseas experiences of student teachers provided some opportunities for students to have self-reflection on those power dynamics. Mahon and Cushner observed that in their overseas experiences, students had reflected on diversity issues through comparing the practices in their home country and the host country. Quezada's and Alfaro's (2007) investigation of the effects of student teaching abroad reveals a number of positive developments such as learning about self when they were posed new challenges. Doppen (2010) noted that overseas experiences can provide a reflection for participants for understanding of national identity within global communities. According to Gilson (2010), an undergraduate teaching abroad program helped the participants for

appreciation and diversity and it provided students with multiple perspectives such as critically evaluating their teaching methods, relevancy in using teaching methods, and their communicative intercultural skills.

In surveying the recent scholarly work on global education, Arnove, Torres and Franz (2012) argued that there is an art of exchange which is carried out between local and global arenas and it transforms processes of local activities through global inclinations. The global activities push the individuals to be locally active. Because the perception of individuals interacting with others is already situated in certain ways, it takes effort to dissolve these barriers and step into the state of the unknown (Andreotti, 2013).

In the rapidly changing environment within local and global dynamics, there is a tendency to examine the socio-political circumstances that are affecting educational practices across countries. Experiencing these changes created conditions for teachers to carefully consider a balanced way of teaching national interests and global trends (Banks, 2004). To what extent should global education embrace ideals of a unified cross national community? Matthews says that we should step out of established understandings of nation states, and then re-focus on civic ideals that can be applicable across nations (Matthews, 2005). Traditional accounts of understanding other nations might neglect the idea of coexistence; therefore, educators are expected to actively involve students to think globally in pursuit of finding solutions for the globally shared problems (Noddings, 2005). The call for preparing more rigorous and extensive diversity embedded courses for teacher candidates is echoed by Ukpokodu (2011), who drew this conclusion from the

narratives of teacher candidates and her personal experiences in teacher education programs.

Secondly, the roles of civic ideals continue to be at the core of global education movement. For example, Cornwell and Stoddard (2006) pursued experiences of global education to seek understanding, collaboration and having personal and community experiences in a dialogical reasoning process that ultimately forms new knowledge, interpretation and analysis of existing practices. Stewart (2007) thought that through expansion of respecting diverse backgrounds starting from local to the larger world community, students can enhance their ability to understand the way that other world cultures perceive social issues. In turn, the development in the understanding of diversity opens up spaces for them to learn diversified and analytical thinking. Hunter, White and Godbey (2006) stated that gaining global competency in educational settings can be better accomplished by the person who has self-interest in gaining the understanding and knowledge of complex world politics, economics, and social issues.

Are the ideas of being critical about complex world issues and to better understand others gaining momentum in global education? Salisbury et al. (2009) stressed that when college students are becoming more self-motivated in understanding global issues and their social and cultural environments, global experiences will cause a positive attitude towards intercultural experiences and studying abroad. Schattle (2009) acknowledged that younger generations are more open to ethical consideration of world issues due to emerging opportunities in social media communications, increased availability of visiting different countries, changes in social dynamics, and ongoing efforts of educators to bring multiple perspectives to today's classrooms.

The moral responsibility of individuals to understand global dynamics are addressed by scholars as well. Banks (2008) situated learning of social justice within the concept of individuals' reflective thinking and understanding of moral and ethical values for all people. Reardon (2010) believed in the importance of moral obligations for humanity and notes that academic and experiential activities that increase the learning of others have the potential to develop individuals' involvement in understanding ethical issues in the world.

Thirdly, the ongoing effects of the global education movement attract different institutional and private players to take initiatives in educational settings. Spring (2009) emphasized the relationship between the expansion of global educational activities and interests of local and multinational players. All these activities attract worldwide organizations and institutions to gather and use knowledge collaboratively to enhance existing practices and problem solving mechanisms. There are various interconnected worldwide dynamics such as cultural exchanges, historical movements, the involvement of NGOs, development in educational institutions, and market driven sources that are shaping globalization efforts and its outcomes (Spring, 2008). Due to institutions' increasing interest in becoming more globally oriented, effective cooperation between private sectors and academic institutions allows for consideration of offering a variety of choices to people on demand (Lee, 2013).

Last but not least, because the participants of this research are social studies teachers, they are tasked with disseminating knowledge and experience that they gained within the global education movement. Scholars consider analyzing concepts that provide global education activities in schools. Stromquist and Monkman (2014) pointed out that

the dynamics that are influential for global communities have impacts on transforming the educational activities in schools. The role of Social Studies Education in the overall knowledge-making process for global education is seen crucial by Merryfield (2008) who thought that the process of connecting ideas in social studies education and global education increases student engagement in the classroom. It also increases the relevancy of social studies education in the current societal contexts. Myers (2006) believed that activities in social studies education can be designed in ways that engage students to understand the role of the United States in the efforts of globalization. For Myers, correlative approaches to social issues and global realities in classrooms can help developing students' understanding of links between politics and civic roles in globalized worlds. Subedi (2010) called for a reconsideration of narratives in social studies curricula since they have been to this point, supportive of teaching in the interest and with the ideals of the nation state. This teaching proves especially difficult in providing the necessary complex knowledge of power relations in the world to students. Global trends and issues significantly influence social studies education. It is a leading yet challenging obligation for social studies educators to develop a curriculum and activities that will help students to become democratic informed citizens of today and future (Jorgensen, 2014).

Gaudelli's (2014) book is a call to transform the world education curriculum in a way that represents the action, experience, and reflection with the consideration of the continuing effects of teachers in the classroom. In this sense, teachers should become "community intellectuals" (Gaudelli, 2014, p.153) who are more keen to learn and teach the dynamics that shape the school community.

The following section provides learning and teaching points of global issues from the viewpoints of experiential education as it examines what kind of expectations, experiences and reflections are needed to become critical, reflective and participatory teachers in today's diverse classrooms.

2.2 EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

Teaching is a way to disseminate knowledge through effective instructional strategies and materials (Shulman, 1986). Joplin (1995) looked at students' learning as the outcomes of implementing various teaching strategies and finding ways to make sure that students are receiving individualized teaching moments. Although, new types of curriculum and innovative methods can be introduced to classroom teaching, any change or transformation of teaching can be meaningful if it proposes an ongoing and rich learning opportunity for teachers. Additionally, such changes are helpful if they re-assess the teacher's practices in classroom, their collaborative actions in schools, the policies and programs that assist the changes and the place the teachers and district representatives as the very owners and agents of the change process (Coburn, 2003).

This section discusses the role of firsthand experience of teachers in international short term study tours and how they convey their experiences effectively into their classroom practices. Experiential learning has several important characteristics that apply to experiences that teachers gain through short term international study tours. Scholars recognize the role of experiential learning in adapting a life-long learning habit in constructing new knowledge, finding teaching strategies, and becoming the agent of change processes in school curricula. Experiential learning is the process of involvement

of a person in a specific situation or event through reflective thinking and active involvement. It encourages the person to perceive and participate into the activity through being critical of the steps of the situation or event and creating hands-on activities, projects and applications (Beard & Wilson, 2010). In this sense, personal, social and cultural dynamics play roles in shaping individual or group experiences.

In Dewey's (1938) approach, experiences are dynamic processes in which change occurs and also cognitive and behavioral approaches of individual are affected. Experiential learning can be seen in a holistic theoretical framework that is transformative in a way that new knowledge is constructed on what is already known and what is recently experienced; it is a unique moment and a critical point in the sense that it provides reflective thinking on comparative social issues, and it is practical in the sense that experiential learning can be turned into actions (Roberts, 2008). In order to understand key aspects of experiential learning, Kolb (1984) provided the perspective that learning in experiential style happens through the steps of adaptation to the moments, constructing new knowledge and seeing new outlooks in the lived experiences of individuals.

Social dynamics of the world and the interdependency of cross-cultural issues have become characteristics of educational research. Through developing perspectives, attention has been given to constructing knowledge through individuals' access to the educational resources and collaborative efforts of social groups. With attention to social groups, efforts to experience more cultures have been strengthened. In this context, our ability and actions to understand, learn, and live by the differences in social groups will determine the quality of constructing new knowledge (Damarin, 1993).

The ever-changing dynamics of the world have helped us to experience knowledge of others and products through travel, commerce and technology. Therefore, knowledge and products start extensively crossing the borders, so people do as well (Friedman, 2006). As the world becomes more interdependent, experiences and knowledge are being shared as academic, social, and cultural forms. For example, networking has arisen in the sense of sharing experiences and knowledge and has embedded itself into the core ideals of competitive economic races between nations and it developed and maintained its power from globally shared knowledge and the transnational use of technologies (Castells, 2011).

The experiences gained in intercultural settings are opportunities for teachers and student teachers to reconstruct their knowledge of global issues and situate their personal and professional experiences to understand an ever-changing and increasingly interconnected world (Cushner, 2007). From this perspective, Birzea (2000) contextualizes the life-long learning activities within the formation of global citizenship. In their comparative study of educational systems in the world's high achieving countries, Stigler and Hiebert (1999) reach the conclusion that teachers should adapt the habit of ongoing learning and reflection to make sure that they convey the best teaching practices in classroom settings. Hollins (1993) noted that teachers' ongoing professional developments should be blended with reflective thinking on their practices and understanding of students' social and emotional distinctions. In this context, teachers' personal experiential and professional learning influence their teaching of students who come from diverse backgrounds.

Wilson (1982) perceived cross-cultural experiential learning as a means to understand effective teaching methods, self-development strategies and how to implement curriculum which is related to global education. One approach to cross-cultural activities is to visit other countries for tourism purposes. Tourism activities that attract the interests of people to the cultural aspects of places can be beneficial to participants in experiencing the cultural components of the destinations (Craik, 1997). The diversification of tourism activities reveals that there has been a tendency to see tourism activities as an opportunity for direct exposure to new adventures and experiences in order to learn about cultures (Crawshaw & Urry, 1997).

In the educational environment, one approach to be exposed to experiential learning is to participate in educational activities such as short-term educational trips and study abroad programs. In terms of study abroad, which situates participants in real life conditions, people become owners of the learning process by being reflective, collaborative and active learners. (Lutterman-Aguilar & Gingerich, 2002). Steinberg (2002) praised the ideals of developing cross-cultural and personal skills in experiential learning while echoing the need for evaluating programs that are organized to provide experiential learning within study abroad programs.

A short-term study program that values personal learning, reflection and interaction through participants' involvement in the planning stage of the trip, full immersion in the culture during the trip and written reflections afterward has been found to be effective (Long et al., 2010). Understanding the way that people live, valuing the existence of others and developing cross-cultural skills in personal and professional life

are identified as positive outcomes of student teachers' service learning experiences in another country (Stachowski & Visconti, 1998).

Intolubbe-Chmil, Spreen and Swap (2012) suggested that experiences and perspectives that come through experiential learning abroad can be transformed into long-term investments by realizing the crucial aspect of roles and engagement of participants. The learning experiences of individuals in cross-cultural settings can be helpful for creating access points in an international education context and transforming existing ideas and activities. In this sense, the following section discusses two forms of experiential learning in the international context: these are study abroad programs and short-term international experiences of teachers.

2.3 SHORT-TERM INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS

In Hofstede's (1986) widely-cited study of the cultural differences model, he explains how power and the roles of individuals are perceived in different cultural settings. It is the reality that cultural differences exist and that cultural and social variation contributes to humanity. Accepting the existence of others and the contributions of different cultures can provide a positive approach in which one can construct a lifelong learning process through realizing the existing of cross-culturally shared issues (Appiah, 2006).

Learning about the others can enhance cross-cultural skills. In the context of cross-cultural understanding, intercultural knowledge and personal skills impacts the ability to distinguish nuances in cultural activities. Reflective thinking and personal

involvement of a person in intercultural settings determine our ability to live and function well with cultural differences (Hammer & Bennett, 2003).

Overseas educational activities and study abroad programs are designed to provide personal and professional skills to participants in the context of cross-cultural settings. They provide opportunities for participants to gain reflective and experiential learning and to find ways to learn about themselves. They also learn the ways that others live and the ways that exchanges happen in a place where differences pose numerous learning opportunities and challenges as well (Storti, 2001).

In the context of learning about themselves while being abroad, Paige (1993) discussed the roles of expectations and emotional reactions of participants prior to encountering educational activities abroad. Kelman (1962) proposed that the outcomes of exchange experiences would be more beneficial through adapting a positive behavioral approach to gain knowledge and to experience daily interaction with the people of the host country.

Because these programs are costly, developers of international short-term programs might want to highlight financial considerations during the planning stage; therefore these programs would be built on the assumptions that the results will pay back what is invested into them as visible and tangible outcomes (Sahin, 2008). Since the trips take place in different locations and are usually intense in nature, understanding the trip context, the location and the roles of participants in the group dynamic should be introduced to participants before the trip. It is also important that the quality of the trip be related to how these dynamics are effectively designed and implemented (Coryell, 2011).

Since overseas experiences or study abroad programs pose challenges and opportunities, they can be maintained as performing a dual role in a sense that the participants follow the rules and responsibilities in professionally outlined areas in group settings, while also enjoying the learning experiences through flexible personal moments (Hulstrand, 2008).

2.4 STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS

Short term study abroad experiences usually take place in periods of one and eight week, and they are less costly and time consuming compared to long term programs. Given a specific time frame, they are expected to provide structured, faculty-guided and experiential learning-oriented outcomes (Donnelly-Smith, 2009). Academic study abroad tours can be attractive to potential participants for the destination's academic offerings and its touristic attractions (García-Rodríguez & Jiménez, 2015). In this sense, academic study abroad programs can be formed in types of academic study, travelling, and overseas service learning projects.

Study abroad takes a person to a foreign land through a journey and personal experience that enables learning about the host country. Study abroad programs provide learning opportunities for subjects such as the understanding of nationalism and globally shared political and economic structures (Dolby, 2004). This personal journey abroad is expected to be structurally guided by professionals. Therefore, overseas experiences of students should not be solely designed to take a person abroad and wait for positive outcomes, but the programs should be designed in a way that the planning stage,

implementation processes, the learning and reflection components as well as professional guidance are included (Hunter, 2008).

The success of the programs depends on how they are handled professionally and how the learning of participants is enriched through experiences, reflection and cross-cultural immersion (Sachau, Brasher & Fee, 2010). To make study abroad programs more structured and professionally guided, Montrose (2002) proposes the idea of creating a contract to track the learning outcomes of students. The contract is expected to be signed by those people who are taking administrative or facilitator roles in the study programs. It is evident in Montrose's approaches that students' learning abroad is expected to increase in concrete, accountable and evaluable programs.

Providing a structural framework is expected to increase the efficiency of the study abroad programs and learning outcomes. When the structural framework is supported by critical dialogical processes of students who examine their preconceived perspectives and reflect on the experiences throughout their time abroad, the positive outcomes of the programs are expected to increase (Trede, Bowles & Bridges, 2013). Pre-departure meetings and learning activities to increase knowledge and skills of students for the study abroad experience can be effective to prepare participants intellectually and emotionally for cross-cultural encounters (Holmes, Bavieri & Ganassin, 2015).

A study abroad program that is planned and started on student pre-readiness through theme-based learning about the host country, that is carried out with cultural immersion programs like site visits, and that is evaluated by quantitative and qualitative reflections of students such as reports and presentations had positive impacts on

enhancing the cross-cultural sensitivity and learning of students (Cai & Sankaran, 2015). The personal experiences and learning through study abroad programs can be enhanced by the help of a host country native who helps study abroad students to understand and live by the norms and habits in the cultural context (Marx & Moss, 2011).

While the specific accommodations and variables such as the native language of the host country, the time allocated for the short-term trip, and time spent with the local people should be closely examined, Anderson et al. (2006) observed an increase of cultural awareness and communication skills among the students who were from the United States as they participated in a four week short-term study abroad program in Ireland. Though these various aspects can be complex, research suggest that a carefully designed and implemented short-term programs that take the expectations, experiences, and evaluation of participants into account can enhance the global mindedness of participants (Jackson, 2008).

2.5 SHORT-TERM STUDY TOURS FOR TEACHERS

The global success of the American higher education system brings internal and external effects to the programs. Higher education institutions are constantly receiving students from all over the world. Internally, that success might shape the idea that the institutions are already providing outstanding services; therefore, adoption of globalization efforts might not get adequate attention (Altbach & McGill Peterson, 1998). Ladson-Billings proposes that since teacher education programs may not reflect the different societal changes and transformations happening recently, they might be educating students based on certain preexisting norms (Ladson-Billings, 2000). It should

be also noted that many higher education institutions in the United States lack extensive programs for international studies or programs targeting the interest of students for global studies (Hayward, 2000).

To overcome these challenges, Heyl and McCarthy (2003) proposed that a comprehensive approach to develop global knowledge in teacher education should be collaboratively recognized and implemented by the governmental and institutional entities because such efforts can achieve their goals through firm support from the nationwide and statewide institutions. And, undergraduate teacher programs need more initiatives and culturally-exposed faculties that support providing more international experiences for students who are very much in need of guidance in the midst of an intense curriculum (Schneider, 2003). Sandgren (1999) observed that the experiences that faculty gained while travelling abroad are transformative because brought positive changes to their understanding and teaching of globalization which in turn were felt by students.

The global understanding and learning of teacher candidates and in-service teachers are expected to increase through carefully designed programs. For example, a way of providing the necessary diversity training to the students in teacher education programs is to place them into a situation where they work or live with diverse ethnic groups (Leeman & Ledoux, 2003). When the placement of preservice teachers into the cultural immersion programs and field experiences are supported by coursework, they feel more self-confident in teaching students who are coming from diverse backgrounds (Wiggins, Follo & Eberly, 2007).

Another way to provide a global outlook and learning about diversity to teachers is to attend short term educational programs abroad. Pitman, Broomhall and Majocha (2011) considered potential outcomes in educational tourism activities such as promoting moral values, understanding and being respectful to others. Tarrant et al. (2011) called for these pedagogical approaches to consider activities for developing personal job skills and social skills. These skills are expected to help participants become globally alert and aware of social issues.

In relation to gaining new perspectives in living and teaching within global contexts, teachers are highly encouraged to experience "cultural immersion" programs abroad where they are encouraged to develop professional and moral values to become successful in different cultural settings. Upon returning from these programs, they are expected to contribute new ways of teaching in classroom activities (Stachowski & Visconti, 1997). Initiatives have been taken by institutions to place teachers into overseas teaching experiences. For these programs, research notes that the participant teachers gained intercultural skills and a professional development opportunity that can positively affect their student teaching (Cushner & Brennan, 2007). An international educational exchange program is expected to provide the participants with genuine learning moments (Rios, Montecinos & Van Olphen, 2007).

Overseas experiences such as teaching or travelling include adaptation to cultural processes and personal, emotional and professional learning (Firmin, Firmin & MacKay, 2007). For example, teachers had overseas experiences for many reasons and they observed the socio-political and cultural influences of the United States in other countries. These trips helped the American teachers to reexamine the local and global

effects of cultures, cross-culturally shared identities and human values (Zimmerman, 2006).

Willard-Holt (2001) found that a short-term study abroad experience for pre-service teachers opened up spaces in their understanding and practices because they learned about cross-cultural differences and their effects in classrooms. Willard-Holt stated that after the experience, the teachers became more aware of moral and professional values that impact their teaching practices. In a study abroad experience, pre-service teachers became more critical of their own perspectives and also of the ways they construct relationships with students (Palmer & Menard-Warwick, 2012). Experiencing the diversity and different forms of social life can enhance the comparative thinking skills of teachers and their understanding of social change (Kambutu & Nganga, 2008).

Stachowski and Brantmeier (2002) observed that pre-service teachers who attended a study abroad program had seen a transformation in their understanding of culture, values, tradition and ethics. The research of Orndorff (1998) revealed that although the study and travel program was short, it created a life-long experience for the attendees. Comprehensive involvement in the visiting country's culture made participants more appreciative of other cultures. Mahan (1990) analyzed the overseas experiences of student teachers and concluded that experiential involvement in cultural life aspects of the host country broaden the teachers' knowledge and teaching strategies. Because of the United States' diverse cultures, Mahan proposed that personal experiences in different cultural settings in the United States would enhance the abilities of teachers to teach effectively.

Elley (1964) found that teachers' preparation of their lesson plans and materials has a large impact on students' learning of global knowledge. An overseas teaching and travel experience can be a learning process that diversifies instructional methods since the new settings present a different type of educational and social atmosphere (Harbon, 2007). A professional development goal can be set for an international overseas teaching placement, but the goal can be achieved by collaborative feedback, personal reflection, and detailed programming that includes activities for immersion into the local culture (Pence & Macgillivray, 2007). The growth of knowledge and intellectual development through overseas teaching experiences provide an appreciation of self-knowledge and self-development to teachers in their educational ideals and practices (Stachowski & Sparks, 2007). Marx (2008) proposed that transforming positive overseas experiences of pre-service teachers into action requires supportive and professional guidance from teacher education programs.

Travel abroad experiences for teachers can challenge and transform their learning processes by helping them re-evaluate their own ability and sense of proficiency in teaching a subject (Tang & Choi, 2004). It is a chance for teachers to reexamine personal opinions and look for ways to enhance their problem-solving skills (Milstein, 2005). Wilson (1983) looked at the study abroad experiences of two teachers and stated that their cross-cultural experiential learning increased their knowledge about the world. Furthermore, Wilson (1984) stated that teachers' short term international experiences can help them tell their stories in class activities and motivate them for new cross-cultural experiences. Introducing a new teaching strategy in a different cultural context within a study abroad program for pre-service teachers can be an option for increasing

participants' professional and personal intercultural skills (Vatalaro, Szente & Levin, 2015).

The challenges that teachers face in different cultural contexts pose learning opportunities by helping to improve professional attitudes and peer and community support in the host country. The idea of developing skills cross-culturally, in turn, illuminates the teachers' perspectives on how teaching should be in their home country's schools with students who do not belong to the mainstream culture (Garii, 2009). Schlein also claimed that transferring this pedagogical knowledge acquired in overseas experiences can help teachers while they teach their home country's students who are coming from diverse backgrounds (Schlein, 2009). Biraimah and Jotia (2012) stated that overseas teachers' experiences have positive impacts on teachers' ability to generate creative curricular activities which are connected to awareness of diversity issues and acceptance of cultural plurality.

According to Ference (2006), a successful education trip should include processes such as preparation before the trip, consideration of every step of the trip, the necessary human support on the ground, and overall student learning processes and evaluation. In this sense, short term trips for student teachers should include careful and collaborative planning from the faculty and a consideration of highlights of the trips such as selecting places that really represent the host country's cultures and history. It should include local people on the ground for helping translate conversations and assisting the groups in steps of the trip. While the programs should be carefully designed to meet the physical needs of participants, they also should be planned to provide students with learning and moments

of reflection. An educational travel experience for teachers should prioritize their critical learning process and active participation in every step of the program (Cushner, 2004).

In scholarly research, participating in travel and learning programs abroad has been found to be beneficial in increasing participants' knowledge and personal and professional skills. The careful assessment of the participants' specific learning points and their ongoing effects are expected to be investigated more (Stone & Petrick, 2013). Existing research notes the benefits of cultural immersion programs abroad in developing participants' intercultural personal and professional skills. There is a need for comparative analysis of factors and outcomes behind teachers' decisions to attend cultural immersion programs (Canfield, Low & Hovestadt, 2009).

2.6 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter has discussed the roles of global education and experiential learning in the context of teachers' short term international experiences. The theoretical framework of this study is shaped by the perspectives provided by global education and experiential learning which value cross-cultural interaction within and beyond borders. From this perspective, this study interprets the data concerning teachers' short term international experiences and has implications for teachers and professionals seeking to expand their knowledge about effective short-term international study tours in order to impact their understanding of global education and experiential learning.

Because this qualitative study is designed to investigate the ways in which teachers were shaped by their international short-term trip experiences and used those experiences to gain global perspectives and advance their professional development, the

following chapter outlines the procedures of conducting the research: the design of theoretical frameworks, selections of site and participants, and the methods of data collection and analysis.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The literature review of this study illustrates the potential that short-term study trips have for teachers to gain global perspectives through experiential learning. Understanding the experiential learning that teachers undergo during an international study tour requires a research approach in which relevant and useful data are obtained through different research methods. In this chapter, the researcher explains the rationale for using a qualitative approach, the role of the researcher, the research questions, the research participants, data collection methods and the procedure for data analysis.

3.1 RATIONALE FOR USE OF A QUALITATIVE STUDY

The rationale for this study is to expand the body of knowledge about the impact of short-term international study tours in the context of experiential learning and global education. It is educational researchers' responsibility to investigate the effects of the international experiences of teachers under the rise of globalization. The purpose of the study is to investigate a short term international study tour's influences on the participants' understanding of global dynamics, cultural differences and experiential learning. The study also investigates how teachers incorporated what they learned from their international experience into their subsequent educational activities.

Using qualitative research methods in an active and dynamic process allowed researchers to make adjustments when he was communicating with participants and at the

time of collecting and analyzing the data. With that active role, the researcher was ready for different circumstances of research design. As the researcher employed qualitative research methods he was able to draw upon different data collection and analysis methods (Creswell, 2007). Within this active role in the research, the researcher was able to use variety of research methods and investigate the personal experiences and meanings that research participants attach to their experiences (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

Qualitative research is the act of making the layers of selected phenomena visible through a researcher's interpretation and representation of data. Because the research was a form of qualitative inquiry, the research process was an act of being creative about finding data sources such as documents and interviews, and using an interpretive approach to the findings and insights that data offer (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). In this sense, the researcher has the qualitative inquiry perspective that the faithful representation of the experience of the teachers in an international study tour requires (Harwell, 2011).

3.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This qualitative study is designed to investigate the impact of teachers' international short-term trips to Turkey in relation to gaining global perspectives and experiential learning. In this sense, the following research questions have been identified as part of this investigation. These research questions emerged from the gap in research about short-term international trips for teachers, specifically the personal and professional effects of study tours.

- 1) How has the short term international study tour influenced the participants' understanding of global dynamics, cultural differences and experiential learning?
- 2) How do teachers incorporate what they learned from their international experience into their subsequent educational activities?

As qualitative research, the study incorporates a range of sources and connects these findings to the issue under investigation (Strauss, 1987). To address these questions in the research, the following sections will discuss the researcher's subjectivity, the conceptual framework, research setting, participants, data collection and analysis methods.

3.3 THE RESEARCHER

The researcher is an international student who has been seeking an advanced degree in the area of educational administration. The personal and professional journey of the researcher shed light on his decision to dedicate his research to the subject of global education and experiential learning. The researcher enrolled in graduate courses that are related to international and global education. Through his voluntary involvement in a non-profit organization, the researcher had taken the position of group leader in short-term international trips for a group of teachers, students, and their families. It is also important to note here that the participants in this research attended a short-term international trip with the same non-profit organization where the researcher had participated in international tours. The researcher was not part of the trip that the participants of the study attended. Reflecting back on his personal involvement the trips and his interest in American teachers' possible changes in perspective through trips illuminates the researcher's decision to conduct this research. Because his background is

as a social studies teacher, the researcher has particular interest in this study because the participants were social studies teachers at the time the study tour took place.

3.4 THE PARTICIPANTS

The participants were recruited from a ten-day international study tour that was organized by a non-profit organization. The participants included nine social studies teachers. All of the selected participants were employed in the same school district at the time the study tour took place. All the study tour participant teachers were invited to take part in the author's study. It is important to note here that the participation of all nine teachers has provided the opportunity for the researcher to broaden the detailed description of the teachers' experience in the study tour. Because the participants had 20 months between the time when the trip took place and the interviews, the researcher assumes that they had the chance to reflect and use their international experiences in their classroom activities.

Table 3.1: The Participants of the Research

Teacher	Gender	School*	Grade*	Subjects*	Prior International Study Tour*	Teaching Experience*
Charles	Male	Middle School	6 th	Ancient World History	No. But he had travelled to around 100 countries	10 years
James	Male	High School	9th-12th	US History, History of Human Rights	Germany, Austria, Croatia, Bosnia	4 years
Jennifer	Female	High School	9th-10th	AP World History, World Geography	Germany	12 years
Jessica	Female	Middle School	7th-8th	Modern World History	Germany	4 years
John	Male	High School	10th-12th	AP US History/EURO /Government	No	7 years
Michael	Male	High School	9th-12th	AP World Geography	Austria, Bosnia-Herzegovina	7 years
Richard	Male	Middle School	9th	World Geography	No	5 years
Robert	Male	Middle School	7th	Social Studies	No	9 years
Tyler	Male	Middle School	7th	Social Studies	No	13 years

*At the time of the study tour: by March-April, 2015

An invitation letter prepared by the researcher was employed to recruit the participants into the study tour. This study was preceded by explaining the steps of the research and their position in the study. The participants' questions regarding the research were answered to their satisfaction, and they were given the option to withdraw from the research at any point. The researcher applied and submitted all required documents to the University of South Carolina's Institutional Review Board to obtain permission to perform the study with human subjects. Once the research and related documents were approved the researcher started conducting interviews and document analysis.

3.5 DATA COLLECTION

Qualitative research consists of deeper inquiry, detailed description and interpretation of a phenomenon or situation being investigated. The researcher employed different research methods, such as document analysis and interviewing, to collect and analyze data (Merriam, 1998). By employing the following research methods, the data were gathered in the identified areas.

- Teachers' pre-trip application letters were collected and analyzed qualitatively.
- Teachers' lesson plans that were prepared based on their experiences during the trip were collected and analyzed qualitatively.
- Through employing an interview protocol, each selected teacher was interviewed and then the interviews were processed qualitatively through transcribing and coding.

Table 3.2: The Chronology of the Study Tour and the Research

Tour Planning Initiated	November	2014
Teachers' Proposal Submitted	December	2014
The Study Tour Orientation	March	2015
The 10-Day Study Tour	March-April	2015
Lesson Plan Prepared	August	2015
Lesson Plans Implemented	September-December	2015
Research Participants Invited to Interview	December	2016
Research Completion	April	2017

3.6 CASE STUDIES

Case study methods become a significant research method in inducting, developing, framing, and implementing a research study to understand the particulars and significant outcomes of the study being investigated. Indeed, there are several roles of researchers

that Stake (1995) refers to such as advocate, evaluator, biographer and interpreters and these dimensions of a researcher are assumed to play a key role in shaping the case study's success in the overall study. To accomplish these goals, the researcher employed multiple data sources to shed light on the contextual, situational and personal insights of the cases (Baxter & Jack, 2008). In order to gain more insights into the international short-term study tour, the researcher posed "how" questions as they are identical in case studies to investigate the real-life experiences of research participants (Yin, 2009).

Eisenhardt (1989) acknowledged that, "theory developed from case study research is likely to have important strengths like novelty, testability, and empirical validity, which arise from the intimate linkage with empirical evidence" (p. 548). The intent of the case study is to present the connecting, defining, descriptive and analytic points within the selected data in seeking a comprehensive understanding of the case. In relation to these attributes, a case study investigates the selected phenomenon with the understanding that it should be oriented on a specific case by looking at the detailed aspects of the variables and providing perspectives to the subject being studied (Merriam, 1988).

As the case study research is the study of a single or multiple cases in which the researcher identifies various data sources and interprets them, multiple case study approach was a central approach in this study (Stake, 2006; Creswell, 2007). It was the researcher's aim to find the similarities between each individual case that is identified as each participant in this study (Yin, 2009). The researcher was exploring the recurring themes in the focus group interview and each individual interview in order to see the commonalities in the responses of the participants. The responses of the participants

allowed the researcher to categorize the responses of the participants under the categorization of geographical learning, historical learning, and cultural learning.

The data collection process also positioned the results of the study into a context where the researcher witnessed diversities within and across the responses of the participants. The responses of each teacher were also so diverse that the researcher observed a shift in his data analysis process as he was anticipating a greater focus on the commonalities. The researcher observed that using semi-structured interviews within a relaxed and open conversational style allowed the researcher and participants to explore diverse meanings in the short-term international study tour (Longhurst, 2003). As the study was constructed in the context of a qualitative reasoning, the findings and analysis allowed the researcher to observe multi-layer themes in the responses of the participants.

3.7 INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS

In qualitative studies, interviews can be used to access informants' lived experiences, perceptions and understanding of cultural and social practices (Weiss, 1994). In the procedure of this research, one of the benefits of interviewing is to value individual stories in which the researcher could trace the ways that interviewees perceive their personal and professional learnings (Seidman, 1998). In this research, the researcher employed interviews and focus groups in which participants' personal experiences and perspectives on the case are the primary reasons for conducting the interviews. In the interview process, the researcher highly valued the verbal accounts of the participants in order to channel the interview process and outcomes (Taylor, Bogdan & Devault 2015).

The researcher chose to interview the research participants in order to gain insights into their personal experiences before and after the trip (Creswell, 2009).

The researcher conducted semi-structured interviews with five participants (Drever, 1995). As the interview procedure and questions were not strictly guided by the researcher, this type of interview allowed the participants to express their thoughts and feelings more openly. Four of the individual interviews took place in the participants' classroom. The researcher interviewed with one teacher in his house. Each interview lasted approximately between forty and eighty minutes. The researcher recorded each interview with a voice recorder that allowed him to easily transfer the audio files to his laptop in mp3 format. As part of the data analysis process, each interview was transcribed and then coded in Nvivo 11, which is a qualitative research tool.

3.8 FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW

The researcher conducted a focus group interview in which four teachers discussed and shared their experiences in the study tour. In the focus group interview, the researcher posed some questions but he chose to more of a listener (Krueger & Casey, 2014). The purpose of the researcher was to explore how teachers reflected on their shared experiences in a group conversation. At the end of the focus group interview, the participants expressed that the group conversation helped them to remember things that they might not have otherwise in an individual conversation.

For the focus group interview, the four participant teachers were selected carefully because all of them were high school teachers. They were given the same outline and they were well informed on the purpose of the focus group interview

(Freeman, 2006). The researcher observed the positive impact of relational context because the members in the group already knew each other and they provided in-depth information within conversational style for their shared experiences in the study tour (Hollander, 2004).

3.9 DOCUMENT ANALYSIS

In order to investigate the pre-requirements for the study tour and to understand the organizer's expectations of the participants, the researcher collected the essays that were written by the teachers prior to attending the trip. The teachers were also required to create study tour related lesson plans upon returning from the study tour. The researcher was also tasked to collect these lesson plans to investigate and interpret the role of experiences and perspectives that the teachers gained through the study tour (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

The application essays provided perspectives for the researcher to analyze the themes and teachers' perspectives. The purpose of the researcher was to identify themes in order to analyze the lesson plans from the perspectives of literature in global education and experiential learning. The researcher used this approach to allow the themes in the application essays to be explored through different lenses (Stake, 1995).

Because the researcher employed a case study research approach and used interviews and documents analysis as a data collection method, he was able to triangulate the data for a rich description of the phenomena under the investigation (Stake, 1995; Cohen & Crabtree, 2008). In this study, document analysis was an effective and efficient way to learn about the demographics of the participants as they were required to provide

personal background information in their application essays (Yin, 2013; Bowen, 2009). The collection of documents also provided the researched with increase knowledge and understanding of participants' expectation from the study tour; therefore, the researcher was able develop personalized interview questions by using the information provided by the participants in the application essays.

3.10 DATA ANALYSIS

The researcher examined the layers in the contextual frameworks of this study. In this sense, descriptions of the data in analyzing the multiple perspectives became a focal point in this research (Wolcott, 1994). The case study included listening to the tapes, transcribing and coding of the interviews and organizing the recurrent themes that appeared in both documents and interviews (Maxwell, 2005).

The researcher utilized the qualitative research tool of Nvivo 11 to code and transcribes the data. The researcher chose to follow inductive coding approach that “begins with close readings of text and consideration of the multiple meanings that are inherent in the text. The evaluator then identifies text segments that contain meaningful units and creates a label for a new category to which the text segment is assigned” (Thomas, 2006). The researcher was able to integrate data from the application essays, interviews and lesson plans through labeling the responses of the participants under geographical learning, historical learning, and cultural learning. It was the researcher's aim to make clear connection between the themes in the findings and present the results in meaningful ways to the readers (Glesne, 2006). Based on themes in the findings, the researcher developed a model (Figure 4.1) to analyze findings.

When the researcher was inductively coding and analyzing the data he was considering the points of integration from the literature review section of the dissertation. As this study is informed by the literature review in global education and experiential learning, the researcher was able to draw the conclusion in chapter 5 with integration of extensive viewpoints that were provided in the literature review.

3.11 LIMITATIONS

This study included nine US teachers who were teaching at the same school district. The group size was small. There were seven male and two female teachers. And they were all white. All nine teachers in the study tour participated in the research. The participants provided rich details about their experiences through written and verbal accounts so that the researcher assumed that their responses were truthful representation of their experiences (Locke, Spirdusa, & Silverman, 1993; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011).

The researcher met the teachers one time to conduct the interview for a time period between forty minutes and eighty minutes. For this study, classroom observation could have been used as a way to better understand the implementation of the lesson plans. The researcher met the teachers after they implemented lesson plans that were related to their Turkey study tour experience.

3.12 SUMMARY

From the qualitative study, the lived experiences of teachers while being abroad have a lot to offer both their personal and professional learning. Especially, in a non-western environment, the reaction of western teachers to the cultural dynamics and

critical issues such as Islam and immigration becomes a point of interest for qualitative researchers.

In this chapter, the researcher specified the research including the methodology and theoretical background of the study. The methods of data collection and analysis in the context of multiple case study methods are discussed as well. Using case study research methods, the following chapter discusses the findings of the research; documents and interviews that were provided by the research participants are analyzed.

CHAPTER 4 DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Understanding the expectations, experiences and learning of the research participants who attended the short-term study tour to Turkey program is the goal of this research. This study is informed by the literature in global education and experiential learning. The written and verbal accounts of the research participants show the kinds of expectations that they had for the study tour, the nature of the experience they had during the trip, and how they evaluated the program. The expectations and experience of the study tour related particularly to the geography, history and culture of the country visited. Based on the responses provided by the research participants, the researcher developed criteria to categorize and analyze the findings (Figure 4.1). The responses of the participants were categorized under the labels of geographical learning, historical learning, and cultural learning.

In chapter 4, the researcher first analyzes the overall experience of the participants through the lens of experiential learning. Then, the researcher analyzes findings of the study from the perspective of geographical, historical and cultural learning. This section analyzes the findings through the lens of global education. The findings show that the participants found the study tour to be effective and a resource for their personal and professional lives. Chapter five concludes the study with a discussion of the results and an evaluation of the professional and personal learning of the research participants.

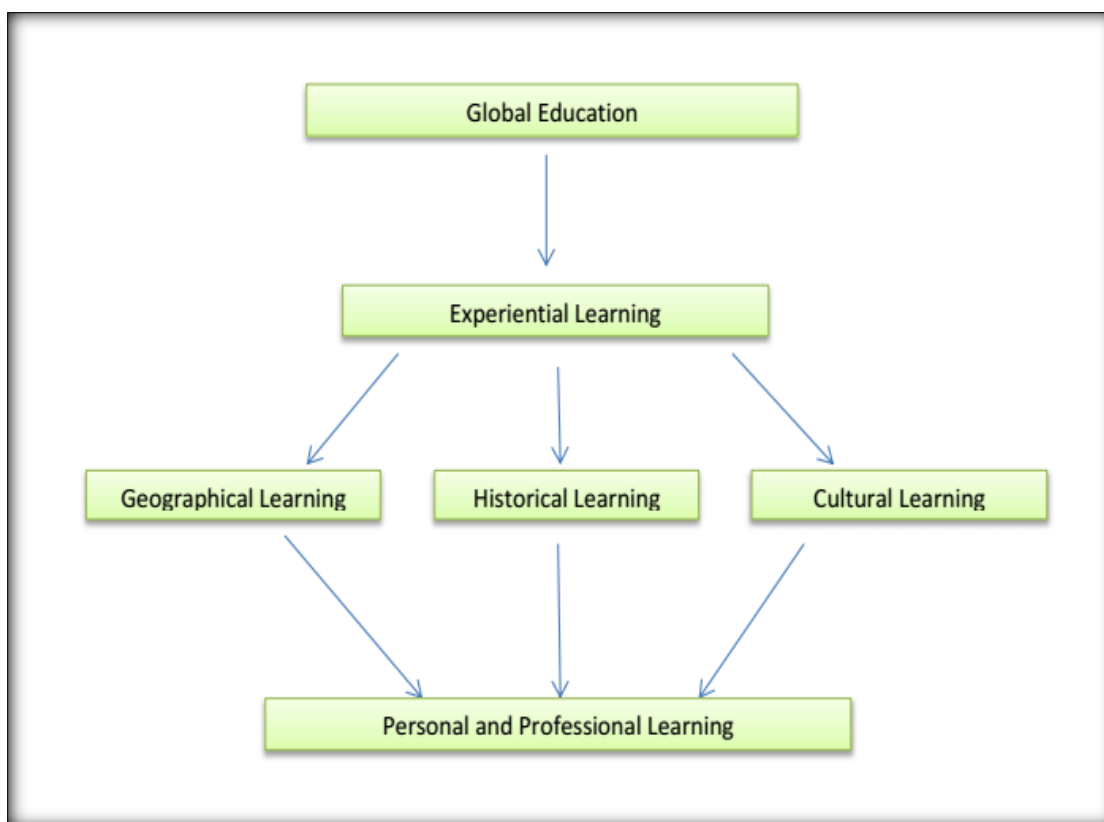


Figure 4.1: The Process of Analyzing the Short-term Study Tour

4.1 EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

a) Application Essays

Data for this section on expectations is based primarily on the analysis of their application essays, with additions as appropriate from the interviews and focus groups. Teachers had to write an application essay in order to apply for the ten-day Turkey Study Tour program. The application essays of those nine teachers who were accepted to the program clearly show teachers' readiness for increasing their understanding of the lives of others. Since the participants were social studies teachers, their application essays show continuity in their personal and professional learning and how they teach Turkey, Islam, and Middle East when these contexts appear in their instruction.

The participating teacher Robert saw the “value in an opportunity to absorb as many ideas and as much culture as possible.” Richard saw the trip as an opportunity to build on his prior learning about the history of Turkey: he took courses about the Ottoman Empire when he was in college and has been teaching World Geography. Tyler called the trip--visiting sites and meeting with people in Turkey—“the opportunity of a lifetime” for a social studies teacher.

Because the teachers are required as part of the trip’s expectations to prepare effective instructional strategies and materials (Shulman, 1986), the teachers saw it as an opportunity to construct new knowledge, to find teaching strategies and become an agent of change in teaching about Turkey, Islam and Middle East in their schools. From small social interactions to important historic sites, the experiences on the study tour abroad helped them to develop a personal story that they could use in their teaching. Instead of considering the personal and professional aspects of the trip as distinct realms, their experiences showed that the personal, direct connection they forged brought the topic to life and integrated their personal experience with their pedagogy.

The participants who were involved in the study tour had the opportunity to observe cultural and social contexts where they learned about diversity and culture of the host country. Through these experiences, they would develop their stories in order to convey them to their students. Their application essays show their interests and plans to make connections between what they already knew about Turkey and what they expect to experience and how they planned to convey that experience to their teaching practices. It is evident in the application essays that the teachers perceived the international short term study tour as an opportunity to build a deeper understanding of culture and diversity.

Jennifer believed that “many teachers may not know about some of the history of Turkey, especially the Ottomans and the founding of Turkey.” She thought that her participation and sharing of experience would help other teachers learn about these subjects. In a similar way, Michael wrote that his experience would provide him confidence in teaching about subjects related to Turkey and “experiencing the habits, customs, and traditions in Turkey would encourage a more worldly view that I could bring back to the classroom.” He saw the value in experiencing the other culture through food and visiting places such as the Grand Bazaar and “being the one able to tell these stories.”

Jessica saw an opportunity to see the places that she only read in history books, to become “wealth of knowledge” and “bring back” to her classroom “primary source information.” James wrote that the study tour could help him “bring the sights, the sounds, the experiences of these places into my classroom”. Because John had been teaching AP European history, he saw an opportunity to experience the culture and history in order to “use pictures and knowledge learned from the trip to teach students about the history of Turkey, specifically the Ottoman Empire.”

Charles saw the “study tour to Turkey as a means to learn more about a country, its culture, and its people.” He was willing to share his experience with his students through employing technology. He anticipated that his “students most likely not have the opportunity to travel to Turkey” so that his experience would help him to tell the “firsthand knowledge of the history” to his students.

b) Interviews

After writing their application essays, the teachers were notified that they were accepted to the study tour. The trip took place in April 2015. In January 2017, the researcher conducted a focus group interview and individual interview with all nine teachers who attended the study tour. The following section examines the impacts of their study tour from the experiential learning perspective.

In analyzing the findings from the focus group and individual interviews, the researcher chose to follow the chronological order of the interviews because the researcher asked different questions with each interview to get different perspectives.

Table 4.1: The Schedule of Interviews

Type of Interview	Participants	Date and Time of Interview
Focus Group	Jennifer	On January 17th, 2017 at 4:15PM
	Michael	On January 17th, 2017 at 4:15PM
	James	On January 17th, 2017 at 4:15PM
	John	On January 17th, 2017 at 4:15PM
Individual Interview	Tyler	On January 18th, 2017 at 2:45PM
Individual Interview	Richard	On January 20th, 2017 at 3:15PM
Individual Interview	Charles	On January 21st, 2017 at 2:45PM
Individual Interview	Robert	On January 23rd, 2017 at 3:45PM
Individual Interview	Jessica	On January 24th, 2017 at 3:30PM

The focus group interview and the individual interviews revealed that the trip, a form of experiential learning, provided the participants with unique moments that some described as once in a lifetime opportunities. These critical points provided them opportunities to practice reflective thinking, a practicality that they used their experience to create lesson plans and classroom teaching (Roberts, 2008).

The teachers agreed that making the trip with other social studies teachers, particularly the composition of the group itself, made a major contribution to their learning experience. In an individual interview, Tyler commented on the group dynamic to give insights into his experience. He said that for the study tour, “time frame was perfect; it was on Easter break, Spring Break”. He said that for the group, their experience meant “solely to find out what Turkey was like, digging to what people were like and the culture was like, and the food was like.” He said that the group size was manageable and added, “I thought the group had to be manageable and twelve to fifteen is a manageable group.” He said that he has the pictures of the teachers on his phone and he would “talk to them, remember this, remember that.” One unanticipated finding was that the trip made a contribution by creating and strengthening the relationships among many of the participants.

In the focus group interview, Michael described the study tour: “from an educator’s point of view, I think that’s a once-in-a-lifetime experience” because he believed that if he goes with another study tour group, he would be with different people and have different experiences. From his perspective, “it would be very hard to recreate those little moments such as hearing the call of prayer.” For example, the group passed by a middle school in a village that was not in their itinerary. They decided to stop and visit the school, and the focus group members agreed that it was one of the highlights of the study tour. Similarly, when James described the study tour he said, “if you took successive groups to places like Turkey, every group is going to be different” because theirs “was a very intellectual group” in which they had “a lot of debate and discussion from sun up to sundown”. For Michael, “being there with each other”, and for Jennifer,

“experiencing everything together” made the study tour a unique experience. John commented that within the group dynamic they “were taking notes and reading journals”.

Several teachers spoke about the transformative aspects of the experience. For Jennifer, the study tour was a chance “to be there, experience all of it and then also gain more knowledge about modern Turkey.” As she also commented that the experience “gives people a different perspective. If you are staying in the United States all you focus on is us and then you don't realize why these other people had these ideas because you never left to know.” In the same way, John said that in the “21st century, we have more opportunity now to see things we talk about.” For Michael, change comes to social studies teachers’ classroom practices because they “experience something, and then you come back, and then you can actually change.”

The teachers then spoke about the impact of the trip on their teaching. After the study tour experience, Michael prepared lesson plans and taught a class about Atatürk and Megacities. He focused on these two topics because they had so many experiences related to those topics. John said that, “the first day I got back I was teaching them, showing them all pictures. They had millions of questions.” Michael told his journalism class about the study tour. He said that his students “wanted me to really focus on freedom of press. They actually got the contact information for the reporter, the journalist we actually talked to. And they called her and actually did an interview and showed that up in our high school newspaper.” John again commented that now he talks more about Turkey in his Advance Placement European history class because, “we have been there”. Jennifer teaches about Islam and she prepared a lesson plan about headscarf when the

group came back to the United States because, “I have my own personal experience in the sense that every time I went into a mosque I had to cover. And so, [it] explains that.”

According to Richard, the study tour experience provided him “really authentic examples. And it makes you [seem] more authentic as well to the students.” To illustrate the use of authentic examples, Richard said that “when we talked about the presidential versus parliamentary system and multi-party system versus two-party system, Turkey tended to be my example because I had more experiences with it.” He said that he prefers not to use England because he said “I am less familiar with theirs than I am with Turkey’s now.” By the same token, Charles sought to provide authentic examples to his students. When he was in Turkey, he used the program Facetime with his students, and when he came back, he said “I actually made them write about their experiences about what they thought, what they saw.”

When Robert was commenting on his experience, he noted that, “trying new things is a good habit. A lot of time that starts with food or music, maybe can expand to other more important things.” In his example, he commented on hearing the call of prayer in Turkey and for him it was “just fantastic to hear all around the town.” He believes that for students being open minded is important when they experience an international travel.

For Jessica, Turkey was not on her list of places to visit. She was encouraged to attend by a previous participant of the Turkey trip. She also commented that “as a teacher we don’t have necessarily the means to go and travel to these countries” so that she “was looking for grants” and the study tour was an opportunity for her. She commented that “one of the great aspects of the trip was having conversations and open dialogue that was allowed and encouraged.” She agreed with Robert that open mindedness is crucial in

cross cultural experience and she said “the more the background knowledge that you come with you have more intelligent questions to ask” when she refers to formal lectures that were scheduled in the study tour. As she experienced cross cultural conversations, when she returned she prepared a lesson plan of Coffee and Tea in conversations. She also values the group dynamic to refer the ongoing conversation of the study tour and said that “we are all on an email chain” and the group members are uploading news articles.

4.2 GEOGRAPHICAL LEARNING

a) Application Essays

Many teachers expressed their learning in geographical terms, learning both about the particulars of Turkey and seeing its geopolitical and regional situation in a new light. In the application essay, Robert expressed his interest to experience and then teaches his students about “how people in Asia Minor are reacting to issues such as conflicts in the Middle East.” He wanted to enhance his “lessons on the 20th and 21st centuries by getting an understanding of non-American points of view”. He felt curious about seeing “how Americanized Mediterranean restaurants are different from the real things.” He wanted to experience the differences in that location because he thought that “adding the unique European/Middle Eastern views from Turkey will greatly enhance the education of my students.”

In the same way, Jennifer thought that “with the current climate around the world, understanding Islam is so important” and she wanted to learn how Turkey-- with its majority Muslim population--“deals with the complicated issues of refugees from Syria

and their borders.” In the last ten years, she taught “Ancient Greece, Rome, Islam, and the Ottoman Empire.” She thought “because of the importance of its location to Europe and the Middle East...by teaching Turkey, students would get another perspective from the Muslim World.” For James, Turkey within its geographical and historical background “showcases many features of the Arabic world, and a model and hopeful leader for the Middle East.”

Charles wrote that “perhaps the greatest influence on Turkey is its geography” where “the Mediterranean Sea has had such persuasion over all the cultures of that area.” He wanted to explore the cities, especially Istanbul in Turkey, and hoped to “help the students visualize the city when they read the stories of conquest and defeat.”

Geographically speaking, Michael was interested in exploring the migration and urbanization patterns in Turkey. For example, he wanted to learn about “both and Christian and Muslim Rule, how did these two group coexist and what remains of Christian occupation.” He also saw the study tour as a way of learning more about “the slow urbanization of Turkey from the birth of civilization to today.” Also, “as a practicing Christian” Jessica expressed her interest in exploring the sites such as “birthplace of Mary or visiting Mount Ararat where Noah's Ark was stranded”. The participants had found an opportunity to visit the House of Mary. However, the itinerary of the study tour did not include going to the Mount Ararat.

All participants wrote about their interest to visit historic sites, some specific and some as representatives of a broader but unfamiliar or less familiar category. Especially they mentioned visiting places such as mosques, [predominantly Orthodox] churches, museums and bazaars. James saw a unique opportunity in visiting a historical site that

“has survived in one way or another for hundreds of years.” And John thought that “as a history instructor” he can benefit from “visiting the many historical sites of the world.” For Richard as a world geography teacher, the visits to sites could provide him the learning of “the architecture and design of the cities and bridges.” For Tyler, “the Grand Bazaar with its sellers and smells” and “two of the seven wonders of the ancient world, The Temple of Artemis and Mausoleum of Halicarnassus” were point of interest.

b) Interviews

In the focus group interview, James said that the experience meant for him to see the country that “was really at forefront of world affairs for centuries” and “what their place is in the world” now. At that moment, Michael mentioned its “incredibly geopolitical position.” James said that it was eye-opening to see how “Turkey is moving forwards with more and more America's influence and always presents Russian influence.” For Michael, Turkey was a place to experience “such a mix of different cultures” which helped him to address “culture units in my classes: Religion, food, housing.”

One thing that was surprising to the teachers in the focus group was expressed by Michael: “the amount of construction, as far as apartment buildings, condos”. In the words of Jennifer, “there were sky rises going up everywhere.” When Michael returned to the United States he prepared a lesson plan on “megacities” that focused on Istanbul. The group reported that they were not expecting so much construction in the urban environment of Turkey.

The focus group reported that the study tour had an impact on their conceptual understanding of place. For example, Michael said that when he teaches about Islam and the Middle East, he is informed by his new sense that “once you see it is not a different world, I mean it is different culturally, but it is the same world we live in”. The group shared reflective thinking about cultural differences. John cited “going to the stranger’s home and eating like a very good meal” as one of the highlights of the study tour. Referring to those differences in Turkey as a place, Jennifer said that “you see a little of everything in terms of like females, like some wearing the hijab, some not choosing and some being very, I don't want to say the word free but just someone Western.” So she wants her students to “see a little of everything when you talk about Islam as a religion.” When Jennifer returned, she prepared a lesson plan about the headscarf.

For John, seeing Turkey was an experience that enhanced his “global perspective”. He said that “going through Istanbul and you see all the Syrian refugees on the corners and being able to talk about that with the kids in the class” was the result of the experience. He said that “I witnessed this. That was two years ago”. He values this personal experience and he expressed that, “it is hard for me to lecture about Japan, I have never been there.” In relation to talking about the places, Michael said that “I do consciously talk more about the Middle East now than what I did before the trip I think.”

The focus group interview revealed that the study tour had an impact on their classroom practices. For Jennifer, seeing the places that were “part of the fall of Constantinople, Istanbul” was a learning experience and she said “that changed my whole lesson plan itself.” For international experiences, James said that, “I push my students, don't just go to Rome and Paris when you travel internationally. Go to different places.

Like a place, Turkey.” In the same way, Jennifer said that “you can go to England and even France and still see Western influence when you go there...[Turkey] you know, you are not totally in the West anymore.” Michael said that “now I emphasize even more, don’t go to just Paris or Rome, don’t do it. Go out of your comfort zone. It is a little bit worrying not knowing the language, but you’ll be okay, you’ll survive.”

In an individual interview, Tyler talked about how his perceptions on Turkey had changed when he compared before and after the study tour. When he referred to Istanbul, he said, “I didn't think it was going to be really as crowded as it was. I didn't think it will be as diverse as it was.” The study tour for him was to “see them real time and be there and walk around there.” And he said that “the crowd of people, the massive people living in Istanbul was just amazing.” When he looked at the way how people share the common spaces, he said that “because the people you know very crowded together but everybody was really okay with that like they were used to that. And Americans we like to have 18 inches in space. In Europe it is more like a foot. In Istanbul, it is like 6 inches.” As he continued to look at the differences in the places, he used an example about two cities in Turkey. He said that in Istanbul “all the shops lining the streets, everybody is in the business, making money, making deals and I thought that was great” and “the goods were from all over the world and they are right there.” Then he said “we got to Izmir. Things were little different. Izmir was a little wilder. There was drinking, there were night clubs, didn't see too much of that in Istanbul. But Izmir, [was a] little more I would say, on the wild side.”

For Richard, he said “I knew zero Turkish” but he thought “the cities we were going to were extremely modern and English tends to be the language that most non-

English-speaking countries learned growing up.” As the group went to “main tourist areas” and “modern places as well” he found “many of the similarities from building perspective, the urban sprawl, the traffic congestion, and the ideas of trying to create bus lanes.” As he was reflecting on going to modern places and traditional places while they were in study tour, he said that “riding two hours on a bus through the countryside that was very authentic, instead of taking the easier route to get to the places.” For him, “the more authentic you can get the better.” Richard thinks that “it is good that students are hearing stories from teachers who went to would be non-traditional areas for international travels for most of these kids” and he said for “most people, their experience with international travel here is England, France, Spain, maybe Italy. Those are the normal places for them to go.” He believes that “to go somewhere else kind of opens their eyes.” In response to the aftermath impact of the study tour, he said “I did one unit that I have done right after I came back from Turkey. He said “we did a vacation planning unit” in which students picked non-traditional places to go. In reflection to Turkey as a place, he said “obviously I am a little bit more sensitive when something comes up if it says Turkey or Istanbul. Because it is something I have seen, most of the places I have been.”

Charles was an exceptional case, as he noted that “I have been to over one hundred countries” and “I have been in Turkey twice.” As he taught “more ancient history but also some world history” he thinks that “unfortunately in this country, sometimes the Middle East is portrayed as a rough, an area where, try not to say this, nice things don’t happen.” He said that “I show them that yet buildings may look different, people may look different but everybody is going to work.” As he reflected on differences on places he said that “there is a grocery store. They are not the big Walmart.

But they are smaller shops.” In order to show a place that represents all history and cultures he designed and implemented a lesson plan on Istanbul when he came back from the study tour. He said he showed his kids how Istanbul “progressed from Greek State to Roman State, to Turkish state, changed over the years.”

For Jessica, one of the takeaways from the study tour was the interactions with people as they toured and stayed in different places. She said that “one of the most profound experiences I had [was] with Syrian refugees.” The Syrian refugee issue has “become more pronounced, people heard about it on the news.” She believes “Americans are just too far away to see it in their face”. As she experienced it in Turkey she said “my students now are very aware of the Syrian refugee crisis. We have had several conversations about it.” When she was referring to international experiences of teachers in general, she said that “maybe it is the teachers, the only person that whatever be the connection to a different culture or different part of the world.”

For Robert, “travelling is important to be educated” and he said that “that is important to have that idea: Man, there is a lot of worlds out there. People aren't the same as you are here. Sometimes the kids don't really understand that.” For him, seeing different places in Turkey was an opportunity to understand everyday life of people. He mentioned about going to the Grand Bazaar and seeing and experiencing everyday life in Istanbul. He also said that it could have been helpful for them if they could visit a grocery store to understand everyday life in Turkey. He said that “that would give us an idea, hey what do you guys eat, how do you guys market stuff.” Robert said that “food is a great way to kind of great starting point for getting kids to appreciate other cultures” and he

talked about his eating experiences in the study tour and the American restaurants that he saw in Turkey.

4.3 HISTORICAL LEARNING

a) Application Essays

Because all the participants in the research are social studies teachers, it is not surprising that they emphasized the historical background of Turkey, but the nature of their historical learning was noteworthy. Some observed that the same territory was home to many layers of civilization over the course of millennia. For example, Michael started his application essay by writing that "Homer and the Greeks, Justinian and Byzantines, the Ottomans, Constantinople and Istanbul; the Study Tour to Turkey would not [only] be a once in a lifetime experience, but it would also make me a better teacher." For James, "to see these ruins [the ruins of Troy], to walk in the footsteps of these heroes [Zeus, Hercules, Narcissus and Hector], that would be an experience" that he said "he would never forget." In the same way, Tyler emphasized visiting "two of the seven wonders of the ancient world, the Temple of Artemis and Mausoleum of Halicarnassus" in Turkey.

Charles also saw the study tour as a way of expanding his comprehension of the history of that region. He expressed that, "I believe that by going to Turkey, I can enlighten the students not only in Turkish history, but [about] Greece, Rome and other European histories." In the same way, John wrote that "as an AP European History instructor, I understand the importance of this country. It was the center of the Eastern Roman Empire, the Byzantine Empire, and the Ottoman Empire. Today, it has significant in the Middle East." James wrote that "Turkey showcases many features of the Arabic

world, and a model and hopeful leader for the Middle East." It was unclear from the context whether he confused Turks with Arabs, or the name of the language Arabic with the common term "the Arab world". Because the tour was conducted *ex post facto*, it was not possible for this study to check for existing misconceptions among the participants and to see whether the tour itself corrected or altered any such perceptions, but this is an important subject for future study tours to examine. Overall, from a historical learning perspective, Robert saw the study tour as a way of "getting an understanding of non-American points of view regarding topics such as the world wars and the Cold War."

South Carolina is a deeply religious state, and religious aspects of the trip were noted by several teachers. Jessica approached the study tour from the historical context of Christianity and Islam. She wrote that "the richness of both Christian and Islamic religion is everywhere in Turkey and I would feel so blessed to have the experience of visiting some of the world's most sacred places." From a similar perspective, Jennifer emphasized the role of Turkey in the Islamic world. She wrote that "with the current climate around the world, understanding Islam is so important." She wrote that "Turkey is a place with so much history. It has always been a crossroads where East meets West. I feel I could bring back the rich history to my students and paint a different picture of the Muslim World." This statement acknowledged that the teachers felt they were surrounded by people who have misconceptions about Islam. Richard also mentioned the role of Turkey in Islamic history when he wrote that "I would be interested in seeing how the people of Turkey are taught and deal with their pre-Islamic history and foundations and how the country has embraced their Islamic faith while maintaining a more progressive culture in the modern world."

b) Interviews

For Jennifer, the study tour provided her with direct experience of the monuments and geography of ancient history and the legacies of many empires, as well as modern times. She said that, “I just wanted to be there, experience all of it and then also gain more knowledge about modern Turkey because I didn't know very much like present day.” In the same way, James said he was interested in “seeing 21st century Turkey, this country that was really at forefront of world affairs for centuries and now, how Turkey, kind of, what their place is in the world.” For Richard, the year before the study tour he started teaching AP Europe. He said that “my Ottoman Empire knowledge was very weak. And my 21st century Turkish knowledge was very weak. So I definitely, I just wanted some background.”

The teachers' background knowledge about the Ottoman Empire before they went to Turkey allowed them to engage in a conversation with a Turkish professor who gave a lecture to the group about the Ottoman Empire. Michael said that “I don't think he knew how much we knew already. It is not his fault. He didn't know. So, he came in. He started asking one more question. He was like, wow! Okay. He was like, good! I think he appreciated it and kind of liked that.”

From a historical learning view point, the study tour allowed the teachers to experience and reflect on what was happening during each time period that they encountered in Turkey. James said that “what was going on in the Middle East got much more important for me. And I was able to speak a little bit more clearly on it.” After the study tour, James designed and implemented a lesson plan about Jewish history in Turkey to “give students a better understanding of the immediate effects to Jewish life after

expulsion from the Kingdom of Spain and acceptance into the Ottoman Empire.” John designed a lesson plan about the European Union and said, “World War I ends and the talk of Turkey stops in AP Euro. And I just made sure to integrate the information that I brought into it.” Jennifer prepared a lesson plan on the Armenian Genocide because she “has been there” and she thought “it seemed like a hundred year anniversary”, and “it was very much like a current event that I can talk to and taught already.” Michael prepared a lesson plan about Ataturk who is the founder of the Turkish Republic because he said “we experienced so much of that.”

In an individual interview, Charles also gave an example on how he used his experience of the study tour in his class. He said “the class that I taught kind of fit right in the trip because we talk about the Byzantine Empire and then the Ottoman Turks taking over. And you know so, I always try to show them the religion how, and I call them three major Western religions, Islam, Christianity and Judaism. I said they are all kind of interrelated when you look at them.” After the study tour, he designed and implemented a lesson plan on religions to teach kids about the major religions. For Charles, at the time he came back from the study tour “Turkey became always everything we were talking about.” In the same way, Richard said that “obviously I am a little bit more sensitive when something comes up, if it says Turkey or Istanbul or something, I pay a little bit more attention.”

For Jessica and Robert, the study tour made them interested in the current political climate of Turkey. Jessica said that “I brought up the coup with Turkey and compared it to the French revolution coup. Because they, my kids don’t know what the coup is. They think it is something that can't really happen. And just showed that, it happened in France

in the 1800s and it is happening, you know, last summer in Turkey, that can happen in our life too. Maybe this coup thing is not that foreign to us.” Robert said “as far as political modern political affairs, it helped because sometime I have kids ask me what is going on, they see something on the news.”

For Tyler, the study tour was a time of reflection on the history. He said that “Turkey doesn't get its due. It doesn't get its reward for its place in history as being that conduit between East and West where ideas flow freely.” And he said that “it's just the age of everything and go up to great wall of Constantinople and walk around that, to see how some of these are preserved perfectly and how some of these falling apart.” As he saw the ancient library in Ephesus, he said that “that library was huge” and he added that “so learning was important to them.” He also commented on private seats that were designed for rich people in the ancient theater in Ephesus. He said that “you know that social classes which still exist today. So, a lot of things in our history are still around today. Time changes but history really doesn't change.”

4.4 CULTURAL LEARNING

a) Application Essays

The prospect of engaging with Turkish culture, both for its own sake and for its larger position in east-west relations throughout history, played a major role in the teachers' goals for the trip. In the application essay for the study tour, Jennifer wrote that "since the founding of Turkey with Ataturk, Turkey has looked to the West as much as the East." She thought that "seeing Turkey and experiencing the culture would only enhance my knowledge for my students." Michael wanted to experience, “the religious

lives of the people in Turkey” and he wrote that “the mixture of Muslim culture and westernization in Turkey is unique, especially in their part of the world.” In the same way, James wrote that “Turkey has been a leader and bridge between the Western and Eastern world, and continues to be so. I feel an immersion in their culture would help me understand why.” John wrote that “as an AP European History instructor, I understand the importance of this country and its culture on the history of Europe and the world.”

Richard wrote that he “would be interested in seeing how the people of Turkey are taught and deal with their pre-Islamic history and foundations and how the country has embraced their Islamic faith while maintaining a more progressive culture in the modern world.” For Charles, the trip meant “absorbing the culture of Turkey, experiencing the religion of Islam and seeing the crossroads of Eastern European and Western Asian influences.” In the application essays, Robert also wrote that he wanted to absorb “as many ideas and as much culture as possible” in Turkey as “a center of the exchange of ideas and culture between East and West.” For Tyler, also absorbing the culture such as seeing the Grand Bazaar with its sellers and smells was part of the reasons to attend the study tour. From a cultural learning perspective, Jennifer saw an opportunity in going to Turkey: “The richness of both Christian and Islamic religion is everywhere.”

b) Interviews

For the focus group teachers who taught cultural units in their classes, the study tour provided them an experience of seeing the daily life of Turkish people in both the private and public spheres. Michael said that “you teach about the Middle East, and you teach about all that but once you see, it is not a different world, I mean it is different

culturally, but it is the same world we live in.” As a reference for cultural differences, Jennifer said that “you see a little of everything in terms of like females, like some wearing the hijab, some not choosing.” For Jennifer, “the amount of people in Istanbul” was surprising. When Michael noted the density of the population, John commented that “for a city that populated, people were so nice.”

For the focus group, interacting with Turkish people was one of the cornerstones of the study tour. They also noted that it would have been nice if they could find more time and opportunity to interact with people. They noted their visit to an elementary school in a village as one of the highlights of the study tour. In the words of Michael, “because they didn't know we were coming, we just walked in; we saw what public school was like on a regular day.” They also visited a private school where they talked to the students. For Michael, this experience was “just like talking to our students. They were interested in the same things when we asked them what they want to do in college.” They visited the office of an imam when, as James said, “he was getting to ready to call the prayer.” They recorded a video of the call to prayer. For the focus group, one of the highlights of the study tour, as Michael said “was going into the actual house” or a Turkish family For John, that “was a cool experience, going to a stranger’s home and eating a very good meal.” As they went to the house for dinner and had visits to institutions, Jennifer said that “everywhere we went they gave us gifts and we gave, we exchanged gifts.”

In an individual interview, Tyler mentioned how the study tour allowed him to reflect on cultural differences while meeting with Turkish people. He said that “I saw a lot of different cultures there and I saw cultures that came and went. I saw cultures they

were coming because the Syrians are not like the Turkish people. So, they are bringing their cultures with them.” For him, this is a continuation of culture. He said that “you take that good from some culture and mixing with your culture and combining. That is what the United States does with our diversity.” When comparing the cultures in Turkey and the United States, he said that in the United States the culture, “is a little more not well defined but a little more structured” but in Turkey he said “the cultures were melted together, didn’t create their own culture and didn’t cover up with each other’s culture.” In reference to interacting with people, he talked about “having dinner over Turkish family's house” and exchanging gifts; seeing “the North Korean hockey team”; and talking to the imam for a while. Tyler and Robert said that they saw the North Korean hockey team when they were eating at a hotel’s breakfast buffet in Izmir. In reference to the recent political climate in Turkey, Tyler said that “I met these people over in Turkey--especially that family--and I am concerned about what might have happened to them.”

Richard teaches a sociology class in which he teaches about cultures, norms and values. Before he went over to Turkey, he was not worried about “safety but more like a culture” because he said “people going to see a group of Americans coming over and I don't know what the foreign views of Americans” are. When he went there, he said “It was kind of an eye-opening experience of seeing some things...I didn't realize how advanced large parts of the country were comparing to the perception of what...I don’t want to say Middle Eastern culture... but that part of the world.” As the study tour continued, he reflected on the cultural differences and he said “things that were similar in both of the cultures, things might be slightly different, things that was a little bit cultural shock for you when we go over...first time I heard call of prayer.”

Several teachers felt the experience clearly empowered them to confront common stereotypes, particularly about Muslims, in their own communities. Richard said that for his classroom practices, “seeing how things [are] working in different areas gave me different perspectives to be able to knock some of these stereotypes out.” One of the things that he noted was interactions with people. He mentioned the dinner in a local family’s house. He said “it was also great to see how interested people were talk to us. It seemed like just as interested talk to us as we were to talk to them.” As the study tour was short term, for Richard “the longer you can stay in areas, the more people be used to you and you get used to them and you start to experience maybe more authentic experiences.” The group ran into a school in a village. For that experience, Richard said that “it seems more authentic to walk into that setting of the school because they [teachers and students] weren't prepared, we were coming.” As the study tour was pre-planned, Richard said that “sometimes you feel pressure to get people what they want to see and sometimes you get pressure to not want to look bad. And so you get a little bit of a blurred vision of what things are.”

For Charles, interacting with the people was an essential part of his experience in the study tour. He said that “the best part of the trip was the dinner in the families’ houses” because meeting with people told “me what the culture is really like.” For him, Turkish people “are very proud of their culture and everything they have. And they want to show you. And they want to be your friend. I just really, really enjoyed that part of it.” In his class, he talked about Ramadan, the holy month in which Muslims practice “what it feels like not to have food [during the] day. I said we do that, kind of, in the West. We give up. Christians give up something in Lent. They are all kind of intermingled.” He said

that when he is in political discussions, “someone will say something about Muslims, something. Being pre-worked on, I say well, hey this is coming from my experiences. I have been in several Muslim countries. I will say this is how people are like. So this is what they are. My trip kind of reinforces to break maybe the wall, how people think.” As a way of interacting with the local people while in the study tour, he noted that the teachers in the group “played soccer with some of the students and teachers.” To have more cross-cultural interaction through short-term international experiences, he said “getting students over there, high school students over there that would be great, especially in the same schools.”

For Robert, experiencing the geopolitical culture of Turkey had an impact on his classroom teaching. He said that “I was surprised how much the Turkish people liked us as Americans. You know, a couple of us joked, we had to say, we are from Canada or something.” As he compared the cultural differences in Turkey, he said that “I understand that a lot of people there in Istanbul, they are business people, they realized we are tourists, we are coming with money, but there are also times when there is no financial gain, like we had a host family.” He also said that “it is interesting that there is just so many different forms of Islam, just like Christianity.” When he talked about the Sufi order in Islam, he noted that, “we took time to see the whirling dervishes.” As they were introduced to Turkish cuisine, he mentioned what types of food they ate and then he said that, “food is a great way, kind of a great starting point for getting kids to appreciate other cultures.” Robert still follows the news about Turkey. One of the important things he learned and wanted to share with his students was how civil rights were supported and encouraged in Turkey. He has focused on this topic because when he was in Turkey, he

interacted with journalists and heard about civil right issues in Turkey. After he came back from the study tour, Robert designed and implemented two lesson plans: Government and Individual Rights. He integrated articles and news about Turkey into the lesson plans.

For Jennifer, the study tour was an opportunity to reflect on cross-cultural dialogue. As they meet with an imam, she said that “he took us into the room and live, we got to watch the call to prayer.” When she reflected on cultural differences in the context of that meeting, she said:

One, you know, really take away was the first time I saw a woman in full hijab. Something inside me went, hah, and I was scared. And I had to look at the mirror and say Jennifer, why did they freak you out, why are you scared? I liked to think that I am very open-minded. Maybe I had so much more to learn just on the inside. And I shared that with my kids; you know, we fear what we don't know. I have never seen a woman in a full hijab. It was foreign to me. I did not know about the headscarf. I learned about that when I was there. And as we progressed, the feeling that I had the first time was not the feeling that I had at the end of the trip. So something had changed, inside me.

As the researcher asked more about her experience with seeing a woman in full hijab, Jennifer said that “I have never been in an Islamic household. I got to go and have dinner, sit with a family. I would never have had that opportunity because in my circle of friends here I don't have an access to that.” She values acceptance as a cross-cultural skill and said that “talking to women who choose to wear it and their reasoning made me have another opinion about the headscarf that I did not have before.” As a teacher, she said that

“maybe it is the teacher is the only person that whatever be the connection to a different culture or different part of the world”. She teaches in an International Baccalaureate School and found opportunity to talk with the students about cultural differences. She said the “cultural aspect that we talked about can flow in and out of every grade level, every subject area.” After the study tour, she designed and implemented a lesson on coffee and tea conversation in which she integrated the experiences she gained from the Turkey study tour.

The participants’ personal and professional learning of geography, history, culture of Turkey was enhanced through the study tour. In order to conclude the findings of the research and summarize chapter four, the researcher chose to provide a descriptive section on the lesson plans that the participants did after they returned from the study tour. Chapter five provides a more in-depth analysis of overall study, its findings and its significance from personal and professional learning perspectives.

Table 4.2: Teachers and Their Lesson Plans

Teacher	Subject(s) Taught	Grades	Lesson Plan 1	Lesson Plan 2
Robert	World History	7th	Government Scope	Individual Rights
Jennifer	AP World History, World Geography	9th-10th	Armenian Genocide	Headscarf
Michael	AP World Geography	9th-12th	Mega Cities	Ataturk
Jessica	Modern World History	7th-8th	Syrian Refugee Crisis	Coffee and Tea Conversation
James	US History, History of Human Rights	9th-12th	Holocaust	Freedom of Speech and Democracy
John	Advance Placement European History	10th-12th	European Union	Freedom of the Press
Tyler	Social Studies	7th	NATO Question	Freedom of Speech
Charles	Ancient World History	6th	Istanbul	Religions
Richard	World Geography	9th	Kurdish Issue	Secularism

Robert, who teaches world history, created a lesson plan on Government that talked about limited and unlimited government. Specifically, he used the current

government of Turkey as an example for this lesson. For his second lesson plan, he chose Individual Rights in order to discuss current human right issues in Turkey. For Jennifer, her personal experience during the study trip inspired her to create and implement lesson plans about the Armenian Genocide and the meanings of the headscarf. Her lesson was informed by her experience of having to wear a headscarf when she visited mosques and her personal observation of other women in headscarves. She chose the “Armenian Genocide” as the theme of the second lesson plan because she was in Turkey on its 100 year anniversary. Michael teaches world geography. His experience in Turkey motivated him to prepare a lesson plan on megacities, where his focus was Istanbul. For his second lesson plan, he chose Ataturk because he saw his historical importance in Turkey.

Because the group saw Syrian refugees in Turkey, Jessica wanted to create an inquiry based lesson plan in which her students were tasked to explore possible solutions for Syrian refugees. For her second lesson plan, Jessica wanted to have a cultural unit where she encouraged her students to have an open dialogue on Christianity and Islam by using the examples of coffee and tea. James teaches about the Holocaust. His experience in Turkey encouraged him to prepare an inquiry-based lesson plan about the “immediate effects to Jewish life after expulsion from the Kingdom of Spain and acceptance into the Ottoman Empire.” The group met with journalists and heard their stories, which led James chose to create a lesson plan in which students explored the possible ways that restrictions on press can harm democracy.

John teaches European History and his experience in Turkey encouraged him to prepare a lesson plan on Turkey’s effort to become a European Union member. For his second lesson plan, he wanted his students explore freedom of the press using the

example of Turkey. Tyler teaches world history and after he returned from the study tour he created a lesson plan on NATO in which he taught about the Turkey's decision to become a NATO member. For his second lesson plan, Tyler focused on freedom of speech because he wanted his students to discuss its importance. For Charles, the Turkey study tour encouraged him to prepare two lesson plans on Istanbul and religions because he saw Istanbul as a place that represents different cultures and historical periods. In his religions lesson plan, he focused on Christianity, Islam, and Judaism in order to encourage his students to have an open dialogue on coexistence. After returning from the study tour, Richard created a lesson plan on the Kurdish Issue as a way of showing the impact of nationalism and cultural beliefs. For his second lesson plan, Richard chose secularism. Through using Turkey as an example, he encouraged his students to reflect on the existence of different beliefs and the role of a government in managing differences.

One notable point jumps out from their choice of topics. Despite the short nature of the trip, and the fact that they shared most of the experiences there, almost every topic was unique. This points to an important consideration about study abroad trips: it can have profound effects on most participants, but those effects can be so diverse that it is difficult to sum them up quantitatively.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

This dissertation examined how an international short-term study abroad experience in Turkey shaped a group of teachers' understanding of global dynamics, cultural differences and experiential learning. It looked at how teachers incorporated what they learned from their international experience into their subsequent educational activities. The knowledge they gained, the experience they had, and the global perspectives and the professional attitudes they developed after the short-term international tour were key areas of focus for this study. The literature reviewed on global education and experiential learning revealed that there was a considerable gap regarding short-term international experiences for teachers in generally non-western and especially in predominantly Muslim countries stands.

In order to understand the experiences of US teachers who attended the short-term study tour program and their subsequent impact in the classroom, the researcher recruited nine teachers who participated in a Study Tour to Turkey in April 2015. The researcher used qualitative research methods for this case study. Qualitative methods allowed the researcher to rely on in-depth analysis of the written and verbal accounts of research participants. For the document analysis portion of the data analysis, the researcher collected the application essays that the study tour participants wrote as part of the application process of the study tour. These documents revealed teachers' rationales,

motivations and expectations for the trip. The researcher conducted a focus group interview and individual interviews with the participants. The qualitative analysis tool NVivo 11 was used to categorize the recurring and relevant themes.

The categorization of the data revealed that their experiential learning could be analyzed under the subcategories of geographical learning, historical learning, and cultural learning. The rich data were thematically multi-layered.

This study was organized around two research questions:

- a) How has the short term international study tour influenced the participants' understanding of global dynamics, cultural differences and experiential learning?
- b) How do teachers incorporate what they learned from their international experience into their subsequent educational activities?

Global education seeks to understand the personal and professional learning of teachers in cross-cultural settings (Johnston, 1993). As this study is informed by global education, the first research question mainly speaks to personal learning of the participants and the second question seeks to analyze the professional learning of the research participants. The research questions, the findings and analyses of the overall study allowed the researcher to summarize and conclude the study in two sections: the personal learning of participants and the professional learning of participants.

5.1 PERSONAL LEARNING

The first research question in this study examined the effects of the short term international study on the participants' understanding of global dynamics, cultural

differences and experiential learning. This study demonstrates that the participants of the short-term study tour program experienced personal learning related to diversity, culture and global issues. The study tour participants had a dynamic experiential process in which they found opportunity for learning about the culture, history and geography of the country visited (Dewey, 1938). Two kinds of experience stood out: people and places. Interacting with local people and visiting different places (general and specific), they developed different perspectives, awareness of other cultures and global dynamics (Hanvey, 1982). Their pre-existing knowledge about the country they visited allowed them to have a richer learning experience through the study tour as they interacted with lecturers and local people.

One particularly noteworthy aspect of their reflections was their ability to see the interconnectedness of cultural and social issues. For example, several of the participants commented on how religious or cultural practices have similarities and differences in the United States and Turkey. They see the cross-cultural similarities between the daily practices and long-term goals of local people (Hanvey, 1982; Becker, 1979; Wilson, 1982; Anderson, 1982).

As the participants had dinner with local families and interactions with students and teachers, their learning about the cultural aspects of the country visited increased (Mahan, 1990). As they learned about and experienced Turkey, they also reflected on how dynamics play in cross-cultural settings. The context of experiencing local differences, understanding dynamics and reaching out to a more global understanding has been found in their responses (Dunlop & Torney-Purta, 1984; Kniep, 1986; Hofstede, 1986; Alger, Harf, 1985; Giddens, 1990). The participants reflected on the necessity of

dispositions and skills such as open-mindedness, cross-cultural understanding and acceptance, and recognizing variety of perspectives (Tye & Tye, 1992; Friesen, 1995; Bennet, 1995; Merryfield, 2000).

The personal learning of the participants in the study tour developed through increasing knowledge of the country visited and gaining cross-cultural understanding (Kolb, 1984). For example, Jennifer shared that seeing a woman in full hijab was a cultural shock for her, but through talking to a woman who chooses to wear the headscarf, she changed her perception and feelings. She lived the moment of the fear of unknown (McCabe, 1994). It is evident that the experiential journey of the teachers was blended with emotional and intellectual aspects (Cushner, 1992; Paige, 1993; Merryfield, 1993). For the study tour, the moments of reflections on self and others were reported by the participants who became more appreciative towards of other cultures and of a variety of perspectives (Orndorff, 1998; Merryfield, 2000). Encountering the emotional challenges and being exposed to learning opportunities was part of the study tour and the study tour enhanced problem solving, cross-cultural skills and the dialogical reasoning of the participants (Storti, 2001; Dolby, 2004; Milstein, 2005; Cornwell & Stoddard, 2006; Firmin, Firmin & MacKay, 2007; Garii, 2009; Sachau, Brasher & Fee, 2010).

The experiential learning of the participants happened in a cross-cultural and international setting; therefore, their learning can be identified as a global education activity (Merryfield, 1995; Merryfield, 1997). In this sense, it was important to investigate the perceptions, experiences and new knowledge of the participants on the study tour in order to understand how they function with the differences in a new cultural and social context (Damarin, 1993). Although the participants stayed in Turkey for a

short period of time, they found opportunities that can be labeled as cultural immersion activities (Stachowski & Visconti, 1997). The findings suggest that the learning activity of teachers broadened their context knowledge of the places and people of Turkey (Razzano, 1996; Craik, 1997; Crawshaw & Urry, 1997). As they reflected on the history, geography, and culture of Turkey and compared them with the United States, they have found opportunities to see the interconnectedness of globally shared values (Merryfield, 1996; Wallerstein, 1996). As they saw the lives of Syrian refugees in Turkey and reflected on that experience, the reports of the participants revealed the global understanding of what happens in one point very much affect things are happening in other places (Kelleher & Klein, 1999; Matthews & Sidhu, 2005).

As they experienced cross-cultural differences, the learning of the teachers also allowed them to redefine the educational, cultural and ethnic diversities and to reconsider the emerging global perspectives (Kirkwood, 2001; Merryfield, 2004; Zimmerman, 2006; Cushner, 2007). For example, several teachers found Turkey more modern and diverse compared to their pre-departure perceptions of the country. Understanding the global knowledge and experiencing the ever-changing and inter-connected areas in social, economic and cultural structures of today's world are crucial part of global education (Stromquist, 2002; Anderson-Levitt, 2003; Stiglitz, 2003; Avery, 2004; Friedman, 2006; Spring, 2008). The responses of the teachers revealed development in their using of skills to compare and differentiate cross-cultural and social perspectives (Stachowski & Brantmeier, 2002; Mahon & Cushner, 2002; Hammer & Bennett, 2003).

More importantly, the study tour allowed the participants to become the owner of the learning process (Lutterman-Aguilar & Gingerich, 2002; Pitman, Broomhall &

Majocha, 2011). The process of the experience provided the participant with a critical learning process of self and active participation in the group dynamic (Cushner, 2004; Quezada & Alfaro, 2007). They used their existing knowledge during the program, reflected on the cultural and social differences and prepared and implemented lesson plan with using their experience and learning (FERENCE, 2006). As the self-interest for gaining understanding and knowledge of complex world politics, economics, ethical, and social issues is crucial in global education, the participants reported that they still follow and share the news about Turkey with each other (Hunter, White & Godbey, 2006; Reardon, 2010; Tarrant et al., 2011; Arnove, Torres & Franz, 2012). This kind of learning about the country visited creates an opportunity to construct life-long learning and analytical thinking of the participants (Appiah, 2006; Stewart, 2007; Rios, Montecinos & Van Olphen, 2007; Kambutu & Nganga, 2008).

In the learning process, another crucial component for the participants was the interpersonal group dynamics through which they were able to read, listen, share and discuss their learning and experience (Long et al., 2010). The learning and experiences of the participants were guided by a host-country insider who helped to facilitate their needs, programs and the conversation in the group (Marx & Moss, 2011). In order to explain the details and the roles of participants in the study tour, the host-country insider also met with the group in the United States for pre-departure meetings (Coryell, 2011). It can be argued that the critical dialogical process which starts with professional guidance and ongoing intellectual and emotional reflections helped the participants when they interacted with the people in Turkey (Andreotti, 2013; Trede, Bowles & Bridges, 2013; Holmes, Bavieri & Ganassin, 2015).

Experiential learning values constructing new knowledge and forming new concepts and projects through cross-cultural encounters (Roberts, 2008; Intolubbe-Chmil, Spreen & Swap, 2012). In this sense, the participants expressed what they already knew about Turkey, its history and culture in their application essays. The verbal accounts of the participants revealed that new knowledge was constructed as a result of their experience and the participants translated their new knowledge into action by creating and implementing lesson plans. The participants' global mindednesses increased as a result of the experience (Jackson, 2008; Beard & Wilson, 2010).

The findings of this study from the personal learning perspective are significant because it contributes insights into the search for effective short-term international study tours. This study uses a thematic approach in which the participants' learning was analyzed based on their responses. The thematic approach focused on the learning of participants about the geography, history and culture of the country visited. Their verbal and written responses suggested that such a thematic approach can be used to picture what they anticipated and experienced on the study tour program. In response to the limited studies on US teachers' experiences in the context of a Muslim country, this study is significant because it extensively explored the effects of the participants' individual and group experiences on the geography, history, and culture of a predominantly Muslim country.

5.2 PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

The second research question in this study concerned how teachers incorporated what they learned from their international experience into their subsequent educational activities. It is important to look at their construction of new knowledge in a comparative

sense. The application essays showed their perceptions and pre-existing knowledge about the country visited. It is evident in the application essays that the participants used comparative language in a sense to understand how things are in the United States and how things could be in Turkey. It should be noted that comparatively knowing or comparatively experiencing can be used to describe the learning activities of teachers. The perceptions of the participants prior to trip were very much shaped by their lived experiences in the United States; therefore, their new learning of the cultures was built upon their pre-existing comparative knowledge of the different cultures. For instance, they mentioned Western and Eastern Culture or Christianity and Islam when they expressed what they wanted to experience and learn through the Turkey study tour.

From the global education perspective, understanding the changes in the knowledge, skills and attitudes of the participants through the study tour experience is important for this study. First, because the participants are social studies teachers, understanding the way people live and reflect on diverse cultures and educating students as democratic and informed citizens are found in their curriculum (Kniep, 1989; Myers, 2006; Jorgensen, 2014). As noted in the literature section of this research, not only social studies teachers but also teachers in other disciplines are encouraged to reevaluate their teaching activities in addressing global issues (Tye, 1990; Wilson, 1993; Merryfield, 2008; Subedi, 2010). The verbal accounts of the participants revealed that they reflected on core values and concepts in Turkish culture and addressed the similarities and differences between their home cultures (Barber, 1995; Stachowski & Visconti, 1998). They also reflected on how their own emotional and intellectual approach played a role in constructing new knowledge while they were in the study tour (Hollins, 1993). Taking

what they wrote in their application essays and what they said about experiences in the study tour into account, the study revealed that their ongoing learning efforts for the country visited are explicit. From this perspective, their knowledge making process on the experience would provide them an opportunity to develop life-learning habits and an appreciation of self-development (Stigler & Hiebert, 1999; Coburn, 2003; Stachowski & Sparks, 2007).

Secondly, this study allowed the researcher to analyze the changes in the professional skills of the participants through the study tour. As the participants found opportunities to construct new knowledge, the participants also reported that they used instructional methods in order to convey their experiences into their classroom practices (Shulman, 1986). Understanding the role of professional skills in conveying the knowledge that the participants constructed in the study tour is a key priority for analyzing their professional learning (Steinberg, 2002). As this study is informed by global education and experiential learning, it sought to understand how the participants utilize their teaching and cross-cultural skills in their instructions with a newly constructed knowledge (Clement, 2002). This research revealed that the participants' professional skills that are stated as necessary for teaching global education increased as a result of the study tour experience. Positive changes are reported in their professional skills that include cross-cultural awareness of a variety of perspectives, differentiating cultural and social identities, and communicating with people from other cultures (Case 1991; Ramler 1991; Kissock, 1997; Quezada, 2004; Anderson et al., 2006; Gilson, 2010). The professional skills also include teachers' ability to diversify the relevant teaching methods, their sense of proficiency in subject teaching and navigating the students'

interests in the teaching of globally critical subjects (Bruce, Podemski & Anderson, 1991; Pickert, 1992; Easterly, 1994; Bryan & Sprague, 1997; Tang & Choi, 2004; Vatalaro, Szente & Levin, 2015).

As the participants reported, the study tour allowed them to teach the students with authentic examples that are inspired by what they saw, lived or learned during the study tour (Joplin, 1995; Merryfield, 1995). The study tour experience of the teachers provided them with a personal narrative form that allowed them to translate their overseas experience for students (Wilson, 1984). These personal narratives allowed the researcher to understand the cultural, social and professional backgrounds of the participants (Rapoport, 2007). Encountering new cultural and social environments in the study tour provided the teachers with new instructional approaches and generating creative curricular activities. For example, they reported that after the study tour they mentioned more about Turkey and the Middle East in their classroom teachings (Harbon, 2007; Biraimah & Jotia, 2012). As they added new perspectives into their teaching of Turkey, Islam and Middle East, it can be argued that the experience provided them with a professional skill of being critical of pre-existing perspectives and narratives (Schlein, 2009; Palmer & Menard-Warwick, 2012).

Lastly, one of the crucial benefits of the study tour was the change in attitude of the participants to learn and teach about the geography, history and culture of the country visited. As instructed by the organizer of the study tour, the participants were required to design and implement lesson plans and they did. On the other hand, the study revealed that they went beyond the organizational expectations and incorporated their learning more than they were required to do. The researcher observed the positive and genuine

approach in participants' willing to teach more about their experiences. The positive approach in teaching international experiences is crucial as this attitude is expected to encourage the students for more international experience (Sandgren, 1999).

Even the knowledge and skills of teachers are developed as a result of the study tour, they could have avoided teaching some subjects that might be perceived as controversial (Tye, 2003). It might be argued here that the moral values of the teachers are also enhanced. This argument can be legitimate as they reported that they taught about issues like Syrian refugee crisis. The moral development perspective can also be effective on their decision to encourage students for more international experiences (Willard-Holt, 2001). The participants reported that they now encourage students to travel non-traditional places for American students with open-mindedness and acceptance. From the global education perspective, encouraging students to think and reflect on globally shared issues is important as opposed to the ideas of national isolationism (Noddings, 2005).

In conclusion, this study revealed the personal and professional learning of short-term study tour participants. As global education requires teachers to develop cross-cultural skills, the experiential learning activity of the teachers provided them with the key understanding of interacting with people from other cultures. Through employing the case study research method, interviewing, and data analysis, the researcher identified the multi-dimensions in the learning experiences of teachers through the study tour. The findings suggested that they personally and professionally gained knowledge and skills to distinguish the geographical, historical and cultural differences while they learned about the commonalities in the life of people. The study tour positively developed the attitudes

of the participants to encourage their students to have international experiences and become aware of the globally shared issues. The lessons they created and implemented after the study show the diversity in the learning of the research participants while they also point out their similar aspirations to learn about the people, places and history of the country visited.

5.3 IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE STUDIES

This study provided insights for the personal and professional learning of teachers through a short-term international study tour. The study revealed that when a model is applied based on the personal and professional experiences of the teachers, the effectiveness and efficiency of the program can be structurally evaluated. In this study, the researcher developed the criteria of geographical, historical and cultural learning of the teachers to understand the learning outcomes for the research participants. This study has implications that future research can address structural approaches to evaluate the learning outcomes of people who attend short-term study programs.

The participants had knowledge on the geography, history and culture of Turkey before they attended to the study tour. This study has implications for future studies to understand the role of background knowledge of participants in creating effective study tours. In designing a similar study tour program, the organizer can create application files in which they ask participants about their background knowledge on the history, geography and culture of the destination. In relation to participants' background knowledge, this study has implications for further research on how people perceptions about the places might change over the course of a short-term international study tour.

For example, in this study the participants expressed their interest to learn about Turkey in the application essays where they referred to diversity in Turkey by mentioning Christianity and Islam or Western World and Middle East. On the other hand, the interviews revealed that they could identify some diversity in Islamic tradition such as the differences between Sunni, Shia or Sufism.

This study has implications for professionals and institutions that organize short-term international study tours. They might consider creating a model to assess the pre-trip perceptions and learning outcomes of study tour participants through receiving verbal and written responses from study tour participants. This study has implications for professionals to create an instructional strategy to evaluate the perceptions, experience and learning of the study tour participants. This study also implications to understand cross-cultural differences in the practices of institutions. For example, the teachers ran into a school in a rural area of Turkey and they were welcomed into the school and the classroom without prior arrangement. That might be considered as a way to understand the cross-cultural differences for institutional toleration.

This study has implications to further analyze the stages of experiential learning in the context of global education. The researcher calls these stages as perceptual process, dialogical process, and pedagogical process. The perceptual process is to understand the expectations and understanding that the participants had prior to trip. In this study, this stage was analyzed through analysis on the application essays. The stage of dialogical process talks to interactive learning process that the participants had during the study tour. In this study, this stage was explored through a focus group interview and series of individual interviews. The pedagogical process took place in the third stage where the

participants incorporated what they experienced into their subsequent classroom activities. In this study, this stage was explored by looking at the lesson plans that the participants prepared.

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APPENDIX A - THE ITINEARY OF THE STUDY TOUR

<i>03/27/2015</i>	<i>03/28/2015</i>	<i>03/29/2015</i>
ISTANBUL	ISTANBUL	ISTANBUL
Arrival to Istanbul	Breakfast	Breakfast
Check-in the Hotel & Rest	Topkapi Palace, Hagia Sophia	Archeology Museum
Lunch	Lunch	Istiklal Street & Church Visit
Yedikule Fortress and City Tour	Underground Cistern	Lunch
Lecture	Blue Mosque	Bosphorus Boat Tour
Dinner at a Restaurant	Dinner at a Restaurant	Ferry trip to Bursa
		Dinner at a Restaurant
<i>03/30/2015</i>	<i>03/31/2015</i>	<i>04/01/2015</i>
BURSA	IZMIR	IZMIR
Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast
Visit to an University	Bus Trip to Izmir	Ephesus, House of Virgin Mary
Grand Mosque	Check -in Hotel in Izmir	Lunch at a Restaurant
Lunch & Local Cosmetic Shop	University Visit	The Basilica of St. John
Visiting a High School	Dinner in a Local Family House	The İsabey Mosque
Whirling Dervishes		Dinner at a Local Restaurant
Panoramic Bursa View		
Green Mosque & Village Visit		
Dinner in Family House		
<i>04/02/2015</i>	<i>04/03/2015</i>	<i>04/04/2015</i>
ISTANBUL	ISTANBUL	ISTANBUL
Flight to Istanbul	Breakfast	Breakfast
Non-Profit Visit	Panorama 1453 Museum	Grand Bazaar
Camlica Hill	Visit to a Newspaper	Spice Bazaar
Lecture	Lunch at the Newspaper	Optional Historical Turkish Bath
Museum: History of Science & Technology in Islam	University Visit and Dinner	Dinner at Restaurant
Dinner at a High School	Dinner in Family House	
<i>04/05/2015</i>		
Istanbul/USA		
Early flight back to USA		

APPENDIX B - MAIL INVITATION TO THE RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

Dear Teacher,

I am writing to kindly request your participation in my dissertation research, which is focused on the study trip you took to Turkey. My name is Zulfikar Berk, and I am a social studies teacher and currently pursuing my Ph.D. at the University of South Carolina.

My dissertation project focuses on teachers experiences in short-term international study tours. Because the group was small, your participation would make a great contribution to my research. But I don't want to ask for a great deal of your time: I know how busy you are. I request the opportunity to interview you for about 60 minutes at a time and place of convenience to you. I am happy to come to your classroom, for example. And I can come anytime in December or the first half of January.

I would like to understand the value of the experience for you and your colleagues. This study is not a critique or the evaluation of the study tour, but aims to understand whether and how the international study tour experience has contributed to your professional development and teaching.

The purpose of this study is to understand:

- 1) How has the short term international study tour influenced your understanding of global dynamics, diversity and culture?
- 2) How have you incorporated what you learned from your international experience into your subsequent educational activities?

I include the official research participant letter that briefly explains my research plan.

I am working on the project under the supervision of Dr. Doyle Stevick at the University of South Carolina. Please let me know if you have any questions. Could I please request an email reply by December 16th? Thank you for considering this request, and I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,
Zulfikar Berk
Ph.D. Student
Educational Administration Program
University of South Carolina

APPENDIX C - RESEARCH PARTICIPANT LETTER

SHORT TERM INTERNATIONAL STUDY TOURS FOR TEACHERS AS a FORM OF EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING: CASE STUDIES OF EDUCATORS TRIPS TO TURKEY

Dear Teacher,

You are being asked to volunteer for a research study. My name is Zulfikar Berk. I am a graduate student in the Educational Administration Department at the University of South Carolina. I am conducting a research study as part of the requirements of my degree in Educational Administration, and I would like to invite you to participate. I am studying on a case study of the experiences and perspectives of US teachers who participated in a short-term international study tour from the theoretical perspectives of global education and experiential learning. The study examines how the teachers' short term international study tour influenced their understanding of global dynamics, cultural differences and experiential learning. It also seeks to understand how teachers incorporated what they learned from their international experience into their subsequent educational activities. This form explains what you will be asked to do if you decide to participate in this study. Please read it carefully and feel free to ask questions before you make a decision about participating.

Participation in this study will consist of answering the interview questions that will be posed by the researcher. The researcher will also collect and analyze application essays for the study tour and lesson plans that were prepared after the study tour. If you agree to participate in the research, the researcher will conduct an interview with you at a time and location of your choice. The interview will involve questions about your experiences on the short term international study tour. It should last about 1 hour. With your permission, the researcher will audiotape and take notes during the interview. The interview will be audio taped so that the researcher can accurately reflect on what is discussed. If you choose not to be audiotaped, the researcher will take notes instead. If you agree to being audiotaped but feel uncomfortable at any time during the interview, the researcher can turn off the recorder at your request. Or if you don't wish to continue, you can stop the interview at any time. The tapes will only be reviewed by the researcher who will transcribe and analyze them. Then the tapes will be destroyed.

Participation is confidential. Study information will be kept in a secure, locked cabinet and in a password protected laptop. Participants will be given pseudonyms to protect their anonymity. The researcher will primarily use the information from the interviews for his dissertation. The results of the study may be published in scientific journals or presented at professional meetings, but your identity will not be revealed.

Participation in this study is voluntary. You are free not to participate, or to stop participating at any time, for any reason without negative consequences. In the event that you do withdraw from this study, the information you have already provided will be kept in a confidential manner. If you wish to withdraw from the study, please call or email the Principal Investigator. There is a minimal risk of discomfort associated with this study.

Taking part in this study is not likely to benefit you personally, but this study will have implications for teachers and professionals seeking to expand their knowledge about effective short-term international study tours in order to impact their personal and professional learning.

You may contact me at (803) 381-8797 and berkz@email.sc.edu with any questions you have regarding this research.

Sincerely,
Zulfikar Berk
Ph.D. Student
University of South Carolina

APPENDIX D - THE INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

The researcher will clarify the participants' questions or concerns before starting the interviews.

Background

- 1) Could you tell me what subjects you teach? What grades? How long have you been teaching?

Expectations

- 2) Could you tell me how you got involved in the study tour to Turkey?
What did you hope to gain from the experience?
What did you know about Turkey before you left?
Did you have concerns about going to Turkey?

The Experience

- 3) Tell me about the trip. What stood out for you?
 - a) What surprised you about the experience?
 - b) How were your interactions with people there?
 - c) What were the most meaningful experiences on the trip for you?
 - d) Did you get to visit mosque? Did you get to visit houses? How was that?

Impacts of the Experience

- 4) Would you describe the trip as a worthwhile learning experience? Why or why not?
 - a) How did your experience affect your understanding of Turkey, the Turkish people, Islam and the region?
- 5) Did the study tour help you think differently about global dynamics? About diversity and culture? About Islam?
 - a) Do you find yourself following the news about Turkey more closely? About Islam? The region?
- 6) Do you feel that experience in the tour helps you in the classroom? Why or why not? Did it influence your teaching?
 - a. Did you have the opportunity to implement planned lessons related to the experience? How was that?
 - b. Do issues related to the trip ever come up in class? Topics like Turkey, Muslims, terrorism, and refugees? Did the experience shape how you respond to these topics?
 - a) What was the most important thing you learned that you wanted to share with your students?
 - b) Did these experiences lead you to encourage your students to have international experiences? If so, could you explain more?
 - c) Did you have the opportunity to share your experience with the fellow teachers? Tell me about that.