The impact of college students' motivational orientations and the social dimension of emotional intelligence in their willingness to study abroad

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Abstract

This study investigated the effects of motivational orientations and the social aspects of emotional intelligence (EI) of L2 Spanish learners' willingness to participate in a study abroad (SA) program. The only significant result was the correlation between an integrative motivational orientation and the Altruism Scale score ($n = 68$, $r = .290$, $p < .05$), indicating that those learners with a higher desire to learn the L2 in order to interact with members of the target community also showed more responsiveness to other people as measured by empathy, nurturance, helpfulness, and social responsibility. No additional connections were found between the motivational orientations and the social aspects of EI. Neither the motivational orientations (integrative/instrumental) nor the social subscales of EI used correlated with the L2 learners' willingness to participate in a short-term (three weeks in Costa Rica, $n = 30$) or a long-term study abroad program (a full semester in Spain, $n = 13$). This finding indicates that those variables do not seem to have an influential effect or predictability on whether participants would ultimately continue their study of L2 Spanish in a foreign country or at home.

Keywords: SLA; Spanish; study abroad; emotional intelligence; motivational orientations; integrative motivation

1. Introduction and Review of Previous Literature

There is a growing interest in second language acquisition (SLA) research to include the role of emotions as a new source of students' individual differences (IDs) (Dewaele, 2005; Dörnyei & Skehan, 2003; Gkonou et al., 2016; MacIntyre, 2002). This is also true in recent literature in the area of teacher's emotions (Gkonou & Mercer, 2017; Martínez Agudo, 2018). With the exception of studies on foreign language (FL) anxiety (Birjandi & Tabataba'ian, 2012; Dewaele, 2007; Gkonou, 2011, 2013, 2014, 2018; Horwitz, 2001; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991; Woodrow, 2006; and many more over several decades), the emotional dimension has not been given sufficient attention in SLA research.

Happiness, embarrassment, anxiety, nervousness, boredom, insecurity, sadness, and anger are some examples of the emotions students can exhibit in the second language (L2) classroom given that "to some extent language learning itself is prone to creating intense emotion" (MacIntyre, 2002, p. 67). Studying emotions one at a time would require an agreement on the definition of what differentiates a given emotion from a similar one if, for example, both of them are members of the same theoretical 'family'. However, the theory of Emotional Intelligence (EI) is a theoretical framework that incorporates all possible feelings and emotional skills into a unified framework. Similarly, when emotions are not viewed as simple linear cause-and-effect explanations, our understanding of the fluidity and dynamism of emotions in SLA studies such as FL anxiety can be enhanced. The Complex Dynamic Systems theory is one of such constructs (Dörnyei et al., 2015; Mahmoodzadeh & Gkonou, 2015). Using this perspective, the classroom setting is seen as a context which has multiple factors at play (the teacher, the learner, the degree of FL anxiety by another student in class, etc.), each influencing those surrounding them, dynamically co-evolving and self-organizing without a central control, therefore causing multiple and unpredictable interferences (Muir & Dörnyei, 2013).

1.1. Emotional Intelligence in SLA

Gardner (1983) proposed that each individual has multiple intelligences such as linguistic intelligence, logical-mathematical intelligence, or personal intelligences. The personal

intelligences include intrapersonal and interpersonal intelligence. Intrapersonal intelligence is the capacity to discriminate among feelings, label them, and draw upon them as a means of understanding and guiding one's behavior, while interpersonal intelligence is the ability to notice and make distinctions among other individuals' moods, temperaments, motivations, and intentions (p. 239).

The theory of EI is heavily based on Gardner's theory of Multiple Intelligences, in particular on the personal intelligences just mentioned. The term "Emotional Intelligence" was coined by Salovey & Mayer (1990) and popularized by Goleman (1995). Salovey & Mayer (1990) defined EI as "the subset of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions" (p. 189). Goleman (1995, 1998) expanded the definition of EI into five basic emotional and social competencies: knowing one's emotions, or 'self-awareness;' managing emotions, or 'self-regulation;' motivating oneself; recognizing emotions in others, or 'empathy;' and handling relationships, or 'social skills.' And in 1997, Mayer & Salovey revised their definition of EI to include a subdomain for understanding and thinking about feelings, emotional skills which were absent from their original definition (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). Their revised definition stated that EI "involves the ability to perceive accurately, appraise, and express emotion; the ability to access and/or generate feelings when they facilitate thought; the ability to understand emotion and emotional knowledge; and the ability to regulate emotions to promote emotional and intellectual growth" (Mayer & Salovey, 1997, p. 10).

The way an individual reacts in a given context is governed in large part by the intensity of the emotional reaction as strong emotions can either facilitate or block cognitive and physiological processes (Goleman, 1995; MacIntyre, 2002). This is similar to the Monitor Model that considered the role of an "affective filter" in preventing input from passing through, consequently obstructing acquisition (Krashen, 1985). EI has many benefits for L2 learners as it reduces stress, anxiety, and conflict; it improves relationships; and it increases achievement, stability, self-motivation, social awareness, and harmony (Goleman, 2005). Since emotions can

enhance our ability to think and plan, to solve problems, or to continue training for a distant goal, EI might help students acquire an L2 more easily if they have the ability to anticipate how talking in an L2 in front of group of students might feel. In fact, anticipatory anxiety can motivate students to prepare well for an upcoming test for example, thereby performing better (Goleman, 1995). If they know anxiety is a high-arousal state which can be minimized with relaxation techniques and anticipatory strategies, they may control it accordingly and effectively if they have the necessary EI skills.

There has been little application of EI to the field of SLA even though EI is involved in the school setting. It is still not widely known, used, or studied in the domain of L2 teaching and learning (Sucaromana, 2012). Some of the initial explorations between the theory of EI and achievement in SLA follow in chronological order. Chuan-Ta (2003) explored the relationship of L2 classroom anxiety and EI skills in the interpersonal, leadership, self-management, and intrapersonal levels. His 311 Taiwanese participants showed a high level of anxiety to study English. Those students with higher L2 anxiety tended to have more EI problems and less developed EI skills, while students with lower L2 anxiety had fewer EI problems and better EI skills. Fahim & Pishghadam (2007) found that 300 English majors' academic achievement was strongly associated with three EI dimensions: the intrapersonal, stress management, and general mood competencies, given that students should foster a good relationship with professors and other students to cope with stressful situations in the classroom (p. 250). Participants' intelligence quotient did not correlate strongly with their GPA at the end of the second year, while verbal intelligence was strongly associated with academic achievement. Dewaele, Petrides, & Furnham (2008) found that among 464 adult multilinguals those with higher trait EI had significantly lower L2 anxiety. They felt capable of identifying their interlocutors' emotions during communication, and they controlled their own stress, feeling confident. Pishghadam (2009) investigated whether EI played a role in academic achievement or any of the four basic language skills. The EI level of the 508 university students in his study correlated with their oral skills (listening and speaking) and their GPA, but not with their reading or writing skills. While students' GPA correlated with all emotional subscales, it was only the stress management subscale that was related to the four skills.

Rodríguez (2010) found that although the 66 beginners and 78 intermediate Spanish learners in his study did not differ in their EI scores, at the intermediate level the regulation and utilization EI subdomains were indirectly related to class participation and higher grades, as long as they had an integrative motivational orientation. López (2011) found that students experienced both positive and negative emotions during instructed L2 learning: fear, happiness, worry, calm, sadness and excitement. At times, negative emotions decreased classroom participation but never to the point of decreasing the motivation to successfully completing the course. The two main aspects that affected students' motivation were the teachers' attitudes and the classroom climate. Birjandi & Tabataba'ian (2012) attempted to see if there was a relationship between EI, L2 classroom anxiety and willingness to communicate. Willingness to communicate had a positive correlation with EI and a negative correlation with L2 anxiety, based on the data from their 88 students. Oz, Demirezen, & Pourfeiz (2015) found that their 159 Turkish university students majoring in EFL displayed high levels of overall EI and a satisfactory level of attitudes towards L2 learning. The perception of emotion subdomain was the strongest predictor of cognitive and behavioral/personality while the utilization subdomain was the strongest predictor of affective/evaluative components of attitudes towards L2 learning.

Based on this line of research, a key question that remains unanswered is if emotionally intelligent people are more successful at learning an L2 given that moods can be used to generate persistence towards challenging tasks, especially in the face of obstacles (Salovey & Mayer, 1990, p. 200). EI could also be a key factor for the changing nature of L2 motivational orientations, but this connection has not been well studied yet.

1.2. Motivational Orientations and the Study of Motivation in SLA

While orientations are the reasons for studying an L2, motivation implies the directed, reinforcing effort to learn it (Gardner & MacIntyre, 1995, p. 207). Motivation is responsible for why people decide to do something, how long they are willing to sustain the activity, and how hard they are going to pursue it (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011, p. 4). L2 motivation is subject to social and contextual influences, and it involves sustaining interest and investing time and energy into

putting the necessary effort to achieve certain goals (Williams & Burden, 1997). It is conditioned by the learners' autonomy to perceive that their learning successes and failures are attributed to their own efforts and strategies rather than to factors outside their control (Dickinson, 1995). And the more recent dynamic conception of L2 motivation recognizes that the various learner attributes display a considerable amount of contextual and temporal variation, and it integrates the various factors related to the learner, the learning task, and the learning environment into one complex system (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011).

In the history of the study of motivation, four phases have been identified (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011): (a) the social psychological period (1959-1990); (b) the cognitive-situated period (during the 1990s); (c) the process-oriented period (at the turn of the century); and the socio-dynamic period (in the last decade). The process model of L2 motivation captured the fluctuations in motivation to learn an L2 and it emphasized the changing nature of motivation (Dörnyei, 2003; Dörnyei, 2005; Scizér & Dörnyei, 2005b). Researchers distinguished 3 phases by which the initial wishes or desires were transformed into specific goals and intentions to which effort was employed to accomplish them in the second stage, and, later on, the whole process was evaluated in the last stage (Dörnyei, 2003). But it was in recent years that the dynamic character of L2 motivation was better accounted for by several theoretical approaches, which defined the transition to the new socio-dynamic period of L2 motivation (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011, p. 74). One of those approaches was the L2 Motivational Self System (Dörnyei, 2005, 2009). This model proposed that there are three key sources for the motivation to learn an L2: the ideal L2 self or the learner's vision of oneself as an effective L2 speaker; the ought-to L2 self or the social pressure coming from the learner's environment; and the L2 learning experience or the positive learning experiences. Another recent approach used the notion of a detailed vision of a possible future self as the fuel for Directed Motivational Currents (Dörnyei & Kubanyiova, 2014; Dörnyei et al., 2015; Muir & Dörnyei, 2013). When an intricate structure of subgoals is laid out along a clear path towards a well-defined vision, the level of motivation promoting action will be kept high, facilitating ongoing momentum (Muir & Dörnyei, 2013, p. 359). This long-term motivational force will be able to override fluctuations in motivation since students become inherently

motivated when they create vivid goals and a potent pathway leading to a successful vision of a possible future self.

Rather than focusing on L2 motivation, the present study is interested in motivational orientations, or the reasons for studying L2 Spanish, and their impact on the students' willingness to study abroad during college. The selection and definition of orientations is context-dependent (Belmechri & Hummel, 1998) and in instructed settings three orientations have been frequently reported: the integrative, the instrumental, and the required. An integrative orientation refers to the desire to learn an L2 in order to know more about the foreign cultural community to the extent of being accepted as a member of that other group (Gardner & Lambert, 1972). An instrumental orientation refers to the utilitarian value and the advantages of learning a new language, such as getting a job, a better CV, or better career opportunities. It does not imply any interest in getting closer socially to the language community (Masgoret & Gardner, 2003). The problem with this type of motive is that it facilitates learning until the goal is achieved, at which moment it seems to lose its potency (Gardner & MacIntyre, 1995). However, as long as there is a clear external reward, learners will employ more effort to the learning task. Finally, the need to fulfill a requirement usually emerges in instructed contexts even as the major motivational orientation (Antes, 1999; Ely, 1986; Mandell, 2002; Oxford & Shearin, 1994; Warden & Lin, 2000), especially in the absence of any other orientation, and if students are at the beginning levels, although this is not always true, such as the case of ESOL immigrants.

EI might provide SLA with interesting new ways to look at willingness to participate in study abroad (SA) experiences. The present study explores the relationship between the theory of EI, the L2 Spanish learners' motivational orientations, and their participation in SA programs during their college years. Even though EI has been shown to correlate with oral communication and integrativeness to the target community (Birjandi & Tabataba'ian, 2012; Dewaele, Petrides, & Furnham, 2008; López, 2011; Pishghadam, 2009; Rodríguez, 2010), no study has focused on affective strategies in SLA and their role in students' intention to participate in a SA program to immerse themselves in the target culture.

2. Null Hypotheses

The present study poses the following null hypotheses concerning the students' motivational orientations for learning L2 Spanish and their social EI abilities:

1. Higher scores on any of those two variables will not lead to students' greater willingness to participate in SA programs to the extent of being a strong predictor of their participation in said programs.

2. The duration of any given SA program (a whole semester versus a few weeks) will not affect students' willingness to participate in said program, and it will not be related to any of those two variables.

3. There will be no relationship between the students' motivational orientations and their scores on the EI social subdomain.

3. Methodology

3.1. Participants

College-level students of L2 Spanish enrolled in a variety of third and fourth year Spanish courses at Butler University, a US-based university, were invited to participate in the present study via email up until the end of the Spring 2015 semester. Third and fourth year Spanish students at this institution usually take courses in Spanish skills (such as grammar, oral communication, business Spanish, composition, and similar) or they take courses in the content areas of culture, literature, or linguistics (such as Spanish pronunciation, Spanish literature in the Caribbean, and similar). There were nine first year, 30 second year, 18 third year, and 11 fourth year students. Participants' age ranged from 18 to 22 with a mean age of 20.22 years. The majority of the participants (63/68, 92.65%) reported English as their L1, one student was a native speaker of Arabic, and the remaining four had English and another language as their native languages: Italian, Spanish, Polish, or Hindi. There were 14 male versus 54 female students. Almost two

thirds were majoring and/or double-majoring in Spanish (43/68, 63.2%) and the remaining third (24/68, 35.3%) were minoring in Spanish.

Of the 68 students who completed the survey, 30 participated in a 3-week SA program to San José, Costa Rica in a few days; 13 traveled to Alcalá de Henares, Spain for a full semester of SA during the Fall 2015 semester; two participated in both SA programs; and 23 had no SA plans in the near future. Most of them (40/68, 58.8%) had already visited a Spanish-speaking country in the past (Spain, Mexico, Costa Rica, Puerto Rico, Argentina, El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala, Cuba, Nicaragua, Panama, Chile, Peru, Ecuador) but mostly for a few days rather than a long stay. Some participants completed a SA program in the past, six in a semester-long program (8.8%) and 10 in a short-stay program (14.7%).

3.2. Instruments / Materials

An online questionnaire was used to measure participants' social dimension of EI (using three self-reported scales), their motivational orientations (using one self-reported scale), and some demographic data. All instructions and surveys in the questionnaire were in English. Only a few statements for each of the three scales measuring the social dimension of participants' EI were included in this section for illustrative purposes. The complete scales can be found in Schutte & Malouff (1999). The scales selected for the present study showed consistent reliability coefficients and validity in previous research, and as reported in Schutte & Malouff (1999).

The first of the three scales used to measure the social dimension of EI was the Interpersonal Reactivity Index developed by Davis (1980), a 28-item self-report questionnaire to assess four dimensions of empathy: perspective taking, empathic fantasy, empathic concern, and empathic personal distress. It uses a 5-point Likert scale with letters on which an "A" represents "does not describe me well" and an "E" represents "describes me very well." Letters convert to a 0 to 4 numeric scale for scoring, nine items are reverse scored, and the scores on the subscales do not aggregate for a total score. The two subscales that are more closely related to EI are perspective taking (PT) and empathic concern (EC). The 14 items from those subscales were used in the online

questionnaire, with participants ranging from zero to 28 points on each one. The PT subscale measures an individual's effort to understand others' feelings, with items like "*I sometimes try to understand my friends better by imagining how things look from their perspective*." The EC subscale score is indicative of an individual's expression of a sense of emotional connectedness with others, with items like "*I often have tender, concerned feelings for people less fortunate than me*."

The second scale was the Self-Report Altruism Scale (Rushton, Chrisjohn, & Fekken, 1981), a 20-item questionnaire to measure the trait of altruism (ALT), or helping others selflessly, related to the social aspects of EI. It uses a 5-point Likert scale to rate the frequency with which participants engage in a variety of pro-social behaviors, with "never" and "very often" as the end-points. Frequencies convert to a 1 to 5 numeric scale and scores can range from 20 to 100. Greater ALT is associated with more responsiveness to others as measured by empathy, nurturance, helpfulness, and social responsibility, with pro-social behaviors such as "*I have helped a classmate who I did not know that well with a homework assignment when my knowledge was greater than his or hers*," or "*I have offered my seat on a bus or train to a stranger who was standing*."

The third scale was the Lennox and Wolfe Self-Monitoring Scale, a 13-item assessment of the sensitivity to the expressive behavior of others and the ability to modify self-presentation (Lennox & Wolfe, 1984). It uses a 6-point Likert scale with letters on which an "A" represents "certainly, always true" and an "F" represents "certainly, always false." Letters convert to a 0 to 5 numeric scale for scoring, two items are reverse scored, and the aggregate total score, which ranges from zero to 65 contains scores from two subscales: the ability to modify self-presentation and the sensitivity to expressive behavior in others. The following are two sample statements from the previous subscales, respectively: "*When I feel that the image I am portraying isn't working, I can readily change it to something that does*," and "*In conversations, I am sensitive to even the slightest change in the facial expression of the person I'm conversing with*." The Self-

Monitoring Scale (SM) relates to the ability to recognize others' emotions and to regulate one's own emotions and subsequent behaviors accordingly.

Students' motivational orientations for studying Spanish at college were measured by an 18-item self-report questionnaire created by Rodríguez (2010), made up of the following three subscales: integrative (INT), instrumental (INS), and required (REQ) motivational orientations. The 18 statements were ordered randomly with one on each subscale reverse coded. It used a 5-point Likert scale on which a "1" represented "strongly disagree" and a "5" represented "strongly agree." For each subscale, participants could obtain a score ranging from 6 to 30. The higher the score on any subscale the more indicative that the student was taking Spanish for the reason the subscale was assessing. Since all participants except one (98.5%) were taking third and/or fourth year Spanish courses to complete a major or a minor in Spanish, the REQ motivational orientation was excluded from further analyses. The last part of the online survey gathered information on some personal information such as age, gender, SA plans, use of Spanish, and similar metadata.

3.3. Data Collection Procedure

The potential participants received an email with information about the research study, a link to the online questionnaire, and a .PDF attachment with the consent form. They were informed that participation was voluntary, that it would not affect their course grades, and that their names would not appear on any report. Once they read the attached document and only if they agreed to participate, they were asked to open the link to complete and submit the questionnaire online. Instructions encouraged them to be very sincere in their responses as there were no right or wrong answers. The following verbatim instructions were used in the questionnaire at various points: *Read each item carefully before responding. Answer as honestly as you can. There are no right or wrong answers. Your answers are anonymous and your Spanish instructor will not have access to your responses under any circumstance. Please be sincere and give the response that best describes you, not what you think should be the best answer for me*. It was expected that participants would be able to complete the questionnaire in about 15-25 minutes.

3.4. Data Analysis

Most data consisted of scores on 5- or 6-point Likert items measuring the two types of motivational orientations selected as well as the four social abilities used to measure their EI. Pearson bivariate correlations were run to test the linear relationships between the six main variables just mentioned. A series of independent-samples *t*-tests were used to compare participants' scores, taking immediate SA plans and participation in a SA program in a Hispanic country as the grouping variables. And two one-way ANOVAs were performed on the same scores, taking the type of SA program (long-stay, short-stay, both, or none) as the grouping variable and in relation to upcoming SA plans or previous SA experiences. All analyses were carried out with IBM SPSS Statistics 25. The alpha level for significance was set at $p < .05$ in all tests.

4. Results

4.1. Social EI Abilities and Motivational Orientations Related to SA

The first null hypothesis examined if L2 learners' interest to participate in a SA program could be determined by their social affective abilities and/or by the type of their motivational orientation for taking Spanish at college. A series of independent-samples *t*-tests were performed on the main six variables taking SA plans as the grouping variable, irrespective of the duration of the program.

Results indicated that the means on the social EI abilities and the motivational orientations were very similar for both groups, as shown in Table 1. There were not significant differences on the variables under study between students with solid SA plans to begin in the succeeding months and those without them.

Variable	Group and N	M	SD	*df*	*t*	*p*
Integrative Orientation	SA plans (n = 45)	23.71	2.951	66	.510	.612
	No SA plans (n = 23)	24.09	2.712			
	SA plans (n = 45)	25.18	3.701	66	-.761	.450

Instrumental Orientation	No SA plans (n = 23)	24.39	4.629			
Perspective Taking	SA plans (n = 45)	19.33	3.618	66	-.254	.800
	No SA plans (n = 23)	19.09	4.100			
Empathic Concern	SA plans (n = 45)	21.78	3.450	66	.005	.996
	No SA plans (n = 23)	21.78	3.464			
Altruism	SA plans (n = 45)	54.38	8.239	66	.506	.615
	No SA plans (n = 23)	55.48	8.979			
Self-Monitoring	SA plans (n = 45)	48.22	6.888	66	.214	.831
	No SA plans (n = 23)	48.57	4.756			

Two-tailed, equal variances assumed

Table 1: Independent-samples t test results for motivational orientations and social EI abilities: Comparison between students with SA plans and those without SA plans (n = 68)

The statistical tests run in the data confirmed the first null hypothesis. Overall, the results suggest that adult L2 Spanish learners at college obtained virtually identical scores on their social EI abilities and their motivational orientations whether they had plans to participate in a SA program or not. This is indicative that a high integrative motivational orientation is not a prerequisite to be able to embark on a SA program for a few weeks or a whole semester. Similarly, possessing higher social EI skills does not seem to be necessary nor a determining factor to join any given SA program. However, could the duration of a given SA program be a key factor? After all, picking among dozens of SA programs could be a decision for which a high level of integrativeness or a set of social EI abilities are needed for those whose return trip is a few months away rather than a few days away. That was the focus of the second null hypothesis.

4.2. The Duration of a Given SA Program and Its Effect

The second null hypothesis specified that neither the students' social affective skills nor their type of motivational orientations for taking Spanish at college would affect their participation in a SA program based on its duration (a few weeks versus a regular semester). To investigate this

hypothesis, two one-way ANOVAs were run on the main six variables taking the duration of the SA experience as the grouping variable.

Participants were asked if they were going to participate in any of two upcoming SA opportunities: a three-week stay in Costa Rica during early summer 2015 or a semester-long stay in Alcalá de Henares, Madrid, Spain during the fall semester of the same year. A one-way ANOVA was conducted to check if there were significant differences in any of the two motivational orientations and/or in any of the four social EI abilities between four groups: no SA plans (n = 23), participation in the short-stay SA program (n = 30), participation in the long-stay SA program (n = 13), and participation in both SA programs (n = 2).

Students in the long-stay SA program to Spain obtained higher scores on all six variables, as shown in Table 2. A significant result was found only for the instrumental motivational orientation F (3, 64) = 3.350, $*p < .05$. But the results of the Tukey HSD post-hoc test did not yield any significant difference among the groups, even though the interaction of the group with the long-stay SA program (n = 13, M = 27.62, SD = 2.567) was very close to reach a significant difference level[1] with the other three groups: the one with no SA plans (n = 23, M = 24.39, SD = 4.629, MD = 3.224, SE = 1.327, $p = .082$), the one with plans for a short-stay SA program (n = 30, M = 24.43, SD = 3.645, MD = 3.182, SE = 1.270, $p = .069$), and the one with plans for both SA programs (n = 2, M = 20.50, SD = .707, MD = 7.115, SE = 2.905, $p = .078$). No significant differences were found in the remaining five variables under study between the groups: neither for the integrative motivational orientation F (3, 64) = .924, $p = .434$, the perspective taking F (3, 64) = .965, $p = .415$, the empathic concern F (3, 64) = .544, $p = .654$, the altruism F (3, 64) = .484, $p = .694$, nor the self-monitoring F (3, 64) = .418, $p = .740$.

1 When the LSD post-hoc test was performed, the interaction of the group with long-stay SA plans reached a significant difference level with the other three groups: no SA plans ($*p = .018$), short-stay SA plans ($*p = .015$), and both SA plans ($*p = .017$). The LSD is the most likely post-hoc test to detect a difference but also the one most likely to make a Type I error when finding a difference. That is the reason why the Tukey HSD was reported, which produced the exact same results as the Scheffe post-hoc test.

Variable	No SA plans (n = 23)		Short-SA plans (n =30)		Long-SA plans (n = 13)		Both SA plans (n = 2)	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Integrative Orientation	24.09	2.712	23.27	3.073	24.77	2.651	23.50	2.121
Instrumental Orientation	24.39	4.629	24.43	3.645	27.62	2.567	20.50	.707
Perspective Taking	19.09	4.100	18.67	3.717	20.69	3.351	20.50	.707
Empathic Concern	21.78	3.464	21.43	3.748	22.77	2.455	20.50	4.950
Altruism	55.48	8.979	53.40	9.042	56.46	6.077	55.50	9.192
Self-Monitoring	48.57	4.756	47.50	7.669	49.77	5.278	49.00	.000

Table 2: Means and standard deviations on two motivational orientations and four social EI skills as a function of the duration of an upcoming SA program (n = 68)

Participants were asked if they had ever participated in a SA program in a Spanish-speaking country before the time of the data collection procedure. A second one-way ANOVA was performed to check if there were significant differences in any of the six variables under study between three groups: no previous SA experience (n = 52), completion of a short-stay SA program of less than eight weeks (n = 10), and completion of a long-stay SA program of at least four months (n = 6).

Results indicated that participants who completed a long-stay SA program in the past obtained greater scores on the motivational orientations, as shown in Table 3. But it was the group of students who completed a short-stay SA program in the past who got greater scores on the four social affective skills under study. The ANOVA results did not yield any significant difference in any variable between the groups: neither for the integrative motivational orientation $F(2, 65) = 1.653$, $p = .199$, the instrumental motivational orientation $F(2, 65) = .686$, $p = .507$, the perspective taking $F(2, 65) = 1.113$, $p = .335$, the empathic concern $F(2, 65) = .724$, $p = .489$, the altruism $F(2, 65) = .152$, $p = .860$, nor the self-monitoring $F(2, 65) = .239$, $p = .788$.

Results largely confirmed the second null hypothesis. L2 Spanish college students with diverse levels of motivational orientations and social EI skills would join any type of SA program, whether the duration is a few weeks or a semester-long stay. Both one-way ANOVAs performed to the data did not yield any significant difference in the variables under study, whether participants had already completed a SA experience or whether they were going to participate in one SA in the next weeks after the data collection. Once again, this is indicative that neither a high integrative motivational orientation nor possessing higher social EI skills are likely to be indispensable or decisive to participate in any given SA program, irrespective of its duration.

Variable	No past SA (n = 52)		Past short-SA (n = 10)		Past long-SA (n = 6)	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Integrative Orientation	23.62	2.731	23.80	3.676	25.83	1.941
Instrumental Orientation	24.94	4.007	23.90	4.630	26.33	3.141
Perspective Taking	19.12	3.889	20.70	3.401	18.00	2.828
Empathic Concern	21.92	3.575	22.00	3.399	20.17	1.722
Altruism	54.56	8.074	56.10	12.261	54.17	3.971
Self-Monitoring	48.46	6.740	48.70	4.832	46.67	2.875

Table 3: Means and standard deviations on two motivational orientations and four social EI skills as a function of the duration of a SA program in the past (n = 68)

4.3. Relationship between the Motivational Orientations and the Social Affective Skills

The third null hypothesis stated that there is no relationship between any social EI skill and the two motivational orientations by adult L2 Spanish college students. In essence, the hypothesis is claiming that there is no relationship between motivational and affective variables in said population.

Pearson bivariate correlation analyses were used to assess the initial linear relationships between the two motivational orientations (integrative and instrumental) and the four social dimensions of EI under analysis (perspective taking, empathic concern, altruism, and self-monitoring). Table 4 presents the correlation coefficients and the significance levels.

Variable Type	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*
1. Integrative	---				
2. Instrumental	**.404****	---			
3. Perspective Taking	.026	-.041	---		
4. Empathic Concern	-.041	-.070	**.361****	---	
5. Altruism	**.290***	.187	.076	**.464****	---
6. Self-Monitoring	.143	.023	**.344****	**.274***	.177

*p < .05, **p < .01

Table 4: Correlation matrices of motivational orientations and EI instruments by Spanish learners (n = 68)

The main finding for the present investigation is the moderate but significant positive correlation coefficient between the integrative motivational orientation and the altruism scale (r = .290, n = 68, *p < .05). These data suggest that helping others selflessly and engaging in a variety of pro-social behaviors for social responsibility was associated with a stronger desire to take Spanish courses to get to know the target communities better. This type of correlation was absent with the rest of the social EI abilities under investigation. Additionally, higher scores on the purely instrumental motivational orientation were never associated with any social EI ability.

A greater integrative orientation was associated with a greater instrumental orientation (r = .404, n = 68, **p < .01). Other research studies have previously reported a similar pattern (Csizér & Dörnyei, 2005a, 2005b; Rodríguez, 2010; Shaaban & Ghaith, 2000). It seems that many undergraduate students who participated in this study value adding a Spanish major/minor to

their degree while also learning this L2 in order to know more about the foreign cultural community and as reflected in their participation in a variety of SA programs. The university offers more than 200 SA programs in over 60 countries, some of them being faculty-led programs. Studying a period abroad is more the rule than the exception, with more than 700 undergraduates per academic year taking courses abroad (Spanish majors/minors traveling to Chile, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Panama, and Spain as their top destinations), and it is not surprising that both motivational orientations are intertwined from the Spanish students' perspective.

Significant correlations were found among the different affective scales used in the present study, with the exception of the Altruism scale which was only associated with the Empathic Concern (r = .464, n = 68, $^{**}p < .01$). The Self-Monitoring scale positively correlated with the Perspective Taking (r = .344, n = 68, $^{**}p < .01$) and the Empathic Concern (r = .274, n = 68, $^{*}p < .05$) scales, the latter two also being positively associated (r = .361, n = 68, $^{**}p < .01$) because they are two subscales of the same Interpersonal Reactivity Index artifact.

Overall, results rejected the third null hypothesis given that higher scores on the Altruism scale were positively associated with a greater integrative orientation. Showing empathy towards others was the only social affective skill related to pro-social behaviors and to helping others selflessly which, in turn, were related to the orientation to learn an L2 to integrate in the target community to the extent of being a member of it.

5. Discussion

The present study was based on the premise that participation in a SA program could relate to the participants' motivational orientation to learn an L2 and to their social EI skills; that the affective and the motivational aspects might be closely related; and that the participation in a long-stay SA program might require high levels in both aspects.

Results indicated that L2 learners with solid plans to participate in an upcoming study abroad program of various lengths (short-stay or long-stay) did not display higher levels of

integrativeness into the target language community nor better levels of social EI skills. When instructed learners of L2 Spanish were asked about their past SA experiences or future SA plans into their degree, no social EI skill nor motivational orientation was ever a factor conditioning their decisions. Even though these results did not reject the first null hypothesis, they are positive in the sense that they indicate that no motivational or affective variable under study would interfere with the students' desire to study abroad during the college years. External factors such as a tight course sequence towards the students' degree or their own individual financial situation will have a greater impact on their SA plans than personality traits. Not possessing high levels of EI could be ruinous in life choices such as deciding whom to marry but the present study indicated that the lack of social EI skills will not prevent anyone from participating in a long-stay SA program to integrate for a few months in a new and foreign community. Similarly, and even though EI is not static and could be trained, it seems that having participated in such a life-long changing experience does not seem to have increased students' social affective skills, according to the ANOVA results of the present study. Nonetheless, the data came from a one-time questionnaire and a replication study with a pre- and post-SA design could better account for the present finding.

Results also confirmed that willingness to participate in a longer program in relation to periods of study abroad will not be affected by the L2 learners' level of integrativeness nor their scores on various social EI scales. However, the two SA programs considered for the present study (Costa Rica and Spain) were faculty-led, in which students were accompanied at all times by one of their Spanish instructors and students stayed with host families with a well-established network of resources for any need or emergency during their stay. A replication of the current study is necessary to measure the extent to which the current results still hold true but for college students who decide to travel abroad individually and for longer periods as their first international experience. Traveling to a new country for a full academic year instead of a semester and being responsible for your own housing, well-being, education paths, and travel arrangements will surely be a different scenario from the one illustrated by the current study. It

is reasonable to expect that the more independent the SA program be in nature the higher the impact of the affective and motivational orientations will be.

Among the various research instruments used to measure the students' social EI skills, it was the Altruism scale that was related to the desire to learn an L2 in order to know more about the foreign cultural community. Possessing high levels of empathy also correlated with altruism, as shown in Table 4. For students who are willing to communicate with members of a FL community to the extent of being accepted as a member of that other group, our study predicted that it was useful that they be skilled at regulating emotions in the self but, more importantly, in others. It was a reasonable result to find that students with higher scores on the integrative motivational orientation were the ones more skilled at understanding and regulating emotions in others by engaging in a variety of pro-social behaviors. Some of the pro-social behaviors measured by the Altruism scale in the present study included having looked after a pet or children voluntarily, having helped an elderly stranger cross a street, having held a door open to someone else, having donated to a charity, or having offered a seat on a bus to a stranger who was standing. Students with a higher integrative motivational orientation were open enough to understand and learn about a FL community. The same students were also the ones more open to understanding emotions others felt, even if those emotions were different from their cultural background. This study indicated that in the L2 classroom, and in relation to students' integrativeness, knowing how to keep positive emotions in others rather than in the self may be more important than simply being aware of one's own and others' emotions at a given point in time.

6. Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

The conclusions of the present study should be seen as limited and exploratory. The total number of participants was small and some of the groups in the ANOVA tests only had a few students. And the range of scores in most of the scales used was very small, making it difficult for different groups to reach significantly different scores.

The depth of the current study was limited by the nature of the instruments selected. There is a myriad of external factors and influences that may lead to a SA experience, but the online questionnaire used in the present study and its various scales did not consider the plethora of factors that pertain to the individuals' life domain. However, the study served to confirm that a variety of emotional and motivational variables (INT, INS, PT, EC, ALT, and SM) were not a necessary condition in the students' willingness to participate in a SA program.

A persistent limitation in much of the research on affect and motivation is that it is based on static questionnaires, which do not capture the "process" nature of motivation. When measuring subjective and attitudinal variables, participants select responses that are socially acceptable and according to how they would like to portray themselves (Oller, 1981, 1982), or they may interpret each question superficially and select what they believe will be a reasonable answer to the researcher (Krosnick, 1999). This effect was minimized in the present study by emphasizing on the questionnaires' instructions that they be sincere and give the response that best describes them, instead of what they think should be the best answer for the researcher.

Future research in the area of L2 motivation and EI might be conducted by implementing a mixed-methods approach that could offer more insightful pictures of the experiences or phenomena under investigation. Recent research has already used a process-oriented approach to examine the dynamic nature of L2 anxiety (Boudreau et al., 2018; Gregersen et al., 2014; Mahmoodzadeh, 2015). The present study could have combined a post-SA interview to collect retrospective accounts about the experience, or participants' social EI scores could have been compared and contrasted with fieldtrip notes collected by the researcher in relation to their integrativeness, altruism, empathy, and similar during the group excursions and daily encounters with the students.

As mentioned in the discussion, this study could be replicated with students taking part in a more independent SA program, which is not faculty-led. In such a scenario, the impact of the affective

skills and the motivational orientations could be higher in the students' willingness to embark in a program of that nature.

Even with these limitations, there are reasons to have confidence in the validity of the findings of this study as the materials were carefully selected to measure a variety of social affective skills. As mentioned in section 3.2., all the scales (PT, EC, ALT, and SM) showed consistent reliability coefficients and validity in previous research, and the sections of the scales that did not directly measure social EI skills were removed from the original scales. Additionally, the statistical methods used for the data analysis captured as much information as possible from the students' responses.

7. Conclusion

If there is a gap in the SLA literature that this study can fill, it is the inclusion of a set of social emotional abilities (namely, altruism or helping others selflessly) that are related to the students' integrative motivational orientation. It is also the empirical confirmation that any L2 learner in a classroom at college level would be willing to join (time and money permitting) any SA program, irrespective of its location or duration. In other words, low social EI abilities or low interest in getting to know more about the L2 community does not seem to be a predictor or impediment to participate in a SA program, including those lasting various months of stay abroad, like the one in Spain used in this study. The results presented here offer an important contribution to the role of social EI skills in SA programs with a language component, given that few previous studies have considered the role of emotional skills in SLA. It was an important step towards a better understanding of a subset of EI abilities students possess or lack which may ultimately facilitate or hinder the willingness to integrate with the L2 community and the willingness to participate in a SA while completing a college degree.

List of acronyms used in this study

ALT = altruism

EC = emphatic concern subscale

EI = emotional intelligence

INS = instrumental motivational orientation

INT = integrative motivational orientation

PT = perspective taking subscale

REQ = required motivational orientation

SA = study abroad

SM = self-monitoring scale

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