

INCREASING THE RATE OF PARTICIPATION IN
INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCES WITHIN THE
COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURAL SCIENCES AND
NATURAL RESOURCES AT OKLAHOMA STATE
UNIVERSITY

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Abstract:

Study abroad and international experiences have become more vitally important as employers begin seeking out candidates who are globally aware and internationally competent. Although this aspect is important, the participation rate of study abroad has been fairly low among universities across the United States. In fact, only 1.5 percent of all students enrolled in institutions of higher education in the United States participated in a study abroad experience during 2013-2014 (NAFSA, 2015). It is becoming more common for universities to have international strategic plans which commit higher education institutions to internationalization (Childress, 2009). With these plans in place, universities are striving to create an environment for their students to recognize the benefits and impacts of participating in an international experience or study abroad. Many students have perceived motivators and barriers which help them to decide whether or not to participate in a study abroad experience while attending their university. To address this issue of low participation rates, a survey was distributed to College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources students at Oklahoma State University. Overall, 74.25% of participating students indicated they were personally interested in study abroad and 77.25% stated study abroad is somewhat or very important. Students were asked to identify perceived motivators and barriers as well as certain aspects of a study abroad they would most like to see when choosing whether or not to participate. Findings revealed the two biggest barriers to participating were lack of money and lack of time. The biggest motivator as to why students choose to participate in a study abroad was gaining overall life experience. The main activities students desired to have included in a study abroad program were acquiring hands-on experience and skills, learning about a different culture, traveling in country, sightseeing, and taking courses related to their major. These findings can assist program developers in tailoring study abroad experiences in which students will choose to participate.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Background

Universities throughout the United States offer many opportunities for students to gain international experiences. Study abroad and international internships have become more common and more students have shown interest in taking part of these international experiences. In a study conducted by Wingenbach, Boyd, and Lindner (2003), students were questioned about their knowledge on international agriculture policies, products, and cultures. Of the students that were questioned, only five percent of the students scored a passing score. Not only have students disconnected from agriculture, but they have also disconnected from international issues and opportunities. One way to address this problem is to offer more appealing programs to students in order to get them thinking about and experiencing other parts of the world and the cultures that coincide. Students have not shown the desire to concern themselves with global events and issues.

Businesses involved in dealing with imported products or producing products to be exported have sought out college students who have international knowledge and experience. College students have often been considered deficient when it comes to being adequately informed about international issues (Redmann, Schupp, & Richardson, 1998).

These deficiencies are not new, however. They have been studied and restudied by many researchers who were determined to increase global awareness and instill a deeper understanding of international issues in students. An issue which has been examined by the International Council in 1994 was that often times faculty have not even been completely aware of the international concepts. Research shows this is not a new problem, but instead is a problem that dates back 15 to 20 years.

Motivators and barriers have been examined in many studies in order to understand what aspects encourage students from participating or hinders them from participating in a study abroad. Determining what students desire when considering an international experience opportunity is necessary when it comes to developing experiences that will entice students to participate. International learning experiences have become vital to creating globally aware and competent students (Ludwig & McGirr, 2003; Zhai & Scheer, 2002). It is necessary for educators to inform students about opportunities and the benefits of participating in international experiences. However, not only do educators need to inform students about opportunities, they also need to inform the students on what options are available for financial assistance. According to previous research, many students feel hindered by the cost of study abroad (Bunch, Lamm, Israel, & Edwards., 2013). Opportunities have become more accessible via scholarships and financial aid offered within the colleges and universities.

Statement of the Problem

According to the National Association for Foreign Student Affairs (NAFSA, 2015), only 1.5 percent of all students in the United States who were enrolled at

institutions of higher education participated in a study abroad experience during 2013-2014. As universities continue to grow, more opportunities become available for students in order for them to set themselves apart in a competitive job market. It has become more difficult for students to distinguish themselves from others due to the increased availability in opportunities of internships and various on-campus activities. With such accessible opportunities of study abroad trips, international internships and other various activities it could be assumed that participation rates among colleges within universities would increase. However, while there has been an increase, research shows there is a plateau in the percentage of students participating in international opportunities (NAFSA, 2015).

Many employers have begun seeking out employees who have international experience, a desire to travel, and even a willingness to live abroad. With employers seeking out these traits in employees, it is important for institutions of higher education to provide ample international opportunities for students to participate in. Previous research has shown there are many characteristics developed by students who participate in a study abroad. These characteristics include a developed global mindset (Parsons, 2010), an increased cultural awareness including interaction between various culture groups (Childress, 2009; Parsons, 2010), improved people and communication skills within other cultures (Ludwig, 2007; Parsons, 2010), advanced levels of confidence when working in different scenarios and development of international networking which ultimately can improve a student's career (Childress, 2009; Parsons, 2010). These are all qualities which can make an employee more marketable to employers and could even create an increase in pay from an employer. Having a company that is globally aware generates benefits for

the company. By increasing global awareness, companies are able to build relationships cross culturally and grow internationally. Maximizing these qualities not only benefit the employers, but also benefit those who are participating in the international opportunities by building character and increasing cultural awareness.

In 2014 Oklahoma State University set forth a goal to have 25% of its undergraduate students participate in a study abroad program before graduating. During the study abroad period of 2015-2016, the goal was met and 26% of all of the undergraduate students at Oklahoma State participated in a study abroad program of some sort. The goal is now to have 50% of all students who graduate from the university to participate in an academic study abroad during their time at OSU. The progress that has been made is as follows: The Spears School of Business had 38% of their students' study abroad in 2015-2016, the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources (26%), the College of Arts and Sciences (24%), the College of Human Sciences (21%), and the College of Education (14%) (Study Abroad, 2016). Currently many study abroad programs are being developed in order to increase the rate of study abroad.

While the percentage of students participating in study abroad at Oklahoma State University seems adequate, there is continued desire to increase the rate. The question is "How can the rate of study abroad be increased at Oklahoma State University within the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources (CASNR)?" Study abroad plays a vital role in developing desire and character in students who participate. The purpose of this research was to identify motivators and barriers to international experiences in order to increase the rate of participation of study abroad in CASNR at Oklahoma State University.

Purpose of the Study

The overall purpose of this research was to describe motivators and barriers of study abroad with implications of increasing the rate of participation in study abroad programs.

The specific purposes of this research were to:

- (a) Identify the personal and educational characteristics of students who participated in this study within the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources at Oklahoma State University;
- (b) Determine the barriers to participation in international opportunities;
- (c) Determine the motivators to participation in international opportunities;
- (d) Determine what students are willing to pay for participation in an international opportunity;
- (e) Identify the activities students prefer in an international opportunity.

Hypotheses

International opportunities and experiences are beneficial when it comes to enhancing global awareness and cultural exposure. Barriers are in place that prevent or hinder students from participating in these international experiences, however, 76.3% of the students who were surveyed in a study at Louisiana State University indicated interest in participating in international opportunities (Danjean, Bunch, & Blackburn, 2015). International experiences offered through universities are often expensive. Researchers have found one of the most influential barriers when it comes to participation in study

abroad is affordability (Bobbitt & Akers, 2013; Briers, Shinn, & Nguyen, 2010). These statistics leads to our first hypothesis:

International experiences offered through universities are often expensive. Researchers have found one of the most influential barriers when it comes to participation in study abroad is affordability (Bobbitt & Akers, 2013; Briers, Shinn, & Nguyen, 2010). This leads to our second hypothesis:

H1: Cost is among the most influential barrier related to enrollment rates of international experiences.

Another major influence on enrollment in international experiences is what opportunities are offered in the experience. When time and money is invested in an opportunity such as international experience, students desire to see benefits directly impact them. Many characteristics can influence students to participate in international experiences offered through their universities. Briers, Shinn, and Nguyen (2010) found the important factors included affordability, the country itself, the subject matter of the program, whether or not there is a language barrier, and the information that was made available to the students about the university and program of the country. This leads to our third and fourth hypotheses:

H2: Listed barriers are not below a mean of 2.49 on a four-point anchored scale to influence student's participation in study abroad.

H3: Listed motivators are not above a mean of 3.50 on a four-point anchored scale to influence student's participation in study abroad.

These hypotheses could be expected because of previous research that has been done. While students are unique, there are many commonalities among university students suggests they perceive similar motivators and barriers when it comes to participating in international experiences. Previous research has identified that cost plays a major role in decision making of whether or not to participate in an international experience. It is evident students are willing to pay more money for an international experience if important activities are included in these trips. If trips encompass enough motivators, the cost of a study abroad will not have as great of an impact in hindering student participation.

Limitations of the Study

This study was limited to agricultural students at Oklahoma State University and did not represent the entire student population. The population selected was a convenience sample and therefore only represents students within CASNR at Oklahoma State University. The study sought out undergraduates and received only a few responses from graduate students. The instrument was only distributed in certain classrooms based on the cooperation of the professors and their students.

Assumptions of the Study

This study assumes students who participated in the survey responded honestly and truthfully. It also assumes students are familiar with study abroad and the offerings at Oklahoma State University. College students are very unique, but this study assumes about 400 college students within CASNR at Oklahoma State University represents the majority of the students within the college based population size.

Significance of the Study

Study abroad participation within CASNR at Oklahoma State University has not increased at the desired rate with doubling the amount of students studying abroad (International Strategic Plan, 2016). This is not to say participation has not increased, but the rate it has increased is not as high as some educators' desire. With the increasing rates of employers seeking out students who are either willing to relocate to another country or who have had international experiences, universities must begin meeting these needs in order to adequately prepare graduates (Bunch, Lamm, Israel, & Edwards, 2013; Redmann, Schupp, & Richardson, 1998). According to an Annual Report on Study Abroad and Travel Programs at Oklahoma State University (2016) rates of participation in study abroad had been on a steady decline from 2008 to 2012. From 2012 to 2015 participation has increased, but only by a total of 15 students. This is an issue at other universities as well as within other colleges at Oklahoma State University.

When it comes to increasing rates of participation in study abroad opportunities among college students, steps must be taken. Study abroad has become an expectation for students, especially those who are desiring to work internationally. According to the Commission on the Abraham Lincoln Study Abroad Fellowship Program (2005), to continue evolving American higher education, study abroad should become a norm, not an exception.

Definitions of Terms

Study Abroad – an activity carried out by university students where they receive credit from their university in the United States upon completion of the international study experience (Institute of International Education, 2016).

Internationalization – focused on the movement of students across borders as well as serving in ways to meet needs in developing areas of the world (Altbach & Knight, 2007).

Globalization – uses aspects such as economic, political, and societal factors in order to encourage a higher rate of international involvement via education (Altbach & Knight, 2007).

Theory of Planned Behavior – predicts the way an individual will engage in a behavior based on three main elements. The three elements include an individual's attitude toward the behavior, subjective norms, and a perceived behavioral control (Ajzen, 1991).

Global Awareness - deepens students' ability to develop awareness of various cultures and backgrounds. Encourages students to deepen their understanding on global issues and seek to find solutions (Partnership for 21st Century Skills, n. d.).

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Study Abroad – What is It?

International experiences and study abroad participation are becoming increasingly important for students to participate in while attending universities across America. These international experiences and study abroad opportunities can consist from anything such as a course led by an instructor to another country to an internship working with a company abroad. Some students are becoming more aware of these opportunities and gaining interest in participating. However, rates of participation in international experiences are still considerably low. Universities are seeking to determine ways to increase the rates of participation in international experiences, such as internships and international study tours led by professors.

Study abroad can be defined as an activity carried out by university students where they receive credit from their university in the United States upon completion of the international study experience (Institute of International Education, 2016). The international activities offered include research, internships, service learning, and classroom study when attending a university in another country. These are

not the only options made available to students, but just a few in which students are able to partake.

As seen previously, students have many opportunities to participate in international experiences and study abroad but sometimes students are unaware of them. Universities across the United States offer opportunities that allow students to experience once in a lifetime adventures through study abroad. Study abroad programs often involve “substantial academic work...and considerable interaction between the student and the culture” (U.S. News, 2016). It not only involves spending time in the classroom and doing research in order to further academic learning, but it also involves spending time immersing a student into the culture in which they are living. Classroom time and cultural immersion are both equally vital to an effective study abroad program.

Internationalization and Global Awareness

Globalization and internationalization are two words that are related, but they do not share the same meaning. Globalization can be considered as using aspects such as economic, political, and societal factors in order to encourage a higher rate of international involvement via education. Internationalization, on the other hand, is multifaceted. It is focused more on the movement of students across borders as well as serving in ways to meet needs in developing areas of the world (Altbach & Knight, 2007). It is easy to recognize how these two words could become confused, but it is also necessary to recognize their differences. When developing study abroad opportunities, universities should be focused on the internationalization of students and the process of getting them across borders and not just the globalization of their university.

Universities are becoming more aware of the need for internationalization of the students at their university. Internationalization plans are becoming more prevalent with the growing awareness of internationalization. These plans are commitments to internationalization written by higher education institutions (Childress, 2009). The plans include anything from different kinds of statements – goal, mission, vision – to the methods of implementing internationalization plans, to timelines (Moats-Gallagher, 2004; Olson, Green, & Hill, 2006; Paige, 2005). Childress (2009) found out of the universities examined, 22 of them had internationalization plans and only 9 institutions did not have plans in place. This indicates leaders among these universities find internationalization plans are important when achieving goals set out before them and desire to implement the plans.

College students seem to have less of an understanding of global issues and international opportunities. In one study conducted by The International Council (1994), findings suggested many of the faculty and staff within universities were not aware of international issues or fully globally aware. Due to this lack of faculty involvement, more opportunities have been made available for faculty to lead and participate in international opportunities and there is more of a need to teach students about global issues due to the growing economy and workforce. Opportunities such as these have decreased the lack of knowledge among faculty and have allowed them to impart their knowledge onto their students more effectively. This study shows, however, the issue of global unawareness and lack of international experiences are reoccurring and have been present for a while.

In a study conducted by Wingenbach, Boyd, and Lindner (2003), students were questioned about their knowledge on international agriculture policies, products, and

cultures. Of the students questioned, only five percent of the students scored a passing score. Not only are students disconnected from agriculture, but they are also disconnected from global issues and international opportunities. Their research found students at Texas A&M University indicated they could learn more about international issues by watching more news stories covering international agricultural issues than interacting with international students at their university. The lack of understanding and awareness of international issues can be reversed if students took advantage of experiential learning opportunities outside of the United States.

Another group of researchers conducted a study that sought to determine the knowledge graduating seniors had obtained on international agriculture throughout their three to five years at Louisiana State University within the College of Agriculture. The hope was to see how the university prepared students and informed them about international issues. This study was conducted by Redmann, Schupp, and Richardson (1998) and had a small response rate due to the optional online response. Ultimately the results of the research indicated overall the students were somewhat deficient in the knowledge they had concerning international agricultural issues. This research indicates internationalization and global awareness have been considerably low since the late 1990s until now. Students have not been made aware the international issues at their university.

In 1999, Radhakrishna and Dominguez sought out to assess global awareness in agricultural students at Pennsylvania Governor School for Agricultural Sciences. They wanted to gain understanding as to why agricultural education students were unaware of international agricultural policies and concepts, as well as the cultures and geography of

various international locations (Welton & Harbstreit, 1990). It was found overall, students were unaware of international agricultural issues and organizations and scores were extremely low across the boards.

Students who are well informed on international issues are typically students who are motivated and independent, but who also have the ability to collaborate with others. They are eager to seek out and construct knowledge based on previous experiences. This is considered social constructivism and can be used to define students (Thomas, 2009). A study was conducted by Briers, Shinn, and Nguyen (2010) to determine what students in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at Texas A&M University perceived about international educational experiences. They sought to determine student interest in international opportunities and examine the relationship between personal characteristics and student aspirations to participate in a study abroad. After conducting research, they found two-thirds of the students surveyed had personal interest in participating in an international educational experience (Briers et al., 2010). Many students ultimately desire to participate in a study abroad or international experience, however, students are deterred by the challenges that come in paying for a program and living accommodations (Irani, Place, & Friedel, 2005; Shinn et al., 2008; Shinn et al., 2009). Analyzing these studies show internationalization cannot be increased effectively if the barriers of time and money are not addressed.

A factor that plays into a lack of internationalization and global awareness among students in universities is that many faculty and staff are not fully aware of international concepts within the subject they teach. Educating faculty and staff about the processes of enrolling and participating in study abroad is beneficial. They feel more confident in

advising students and encouraging them to participate in these international experiences in order to improve themselves (Spiering & Erickson, 2006). Etling (1996) found only about five percent of school teachers in the United States have participated in course work that has deepened their knowledge on international issues. This percent is extremely low and has not shown many signs of increasing quickly. Increasing knowledge of the importance of internationalization in faculty will create relevance for students and possibly will allow for an increase in participation (Navarro, 2005). Navarro addresses the idea that curriculum involving internationalization is becoming increasingly more necessary and requires the complete participation from the faculty. Increasing the rate of study abroad and increasing global awareness can be done via the encouragement to educators to tailor their courses to include international curriculum and presenting their lessons on a global scale rather than just the more local scale (Radhakrishna & Dominguez, 1999). Ultimately, it comes down to faculty making it a priority to communicate how study abroad is both prevalent and beneficial if universities want to see an increase in student participation. Without the support of faculty, the likelihood of participation increasing is little to none.

Impacts of Study Abroad

When striving to increase rates of participation in study abroad opportunities among college students, steps must be taken to improve the study abroad opportunities themselves. Study abroad is becoming an expectation for students, especially those who are desiring to work internationally. According to the Commission on the Abraham Lincoln Study Abroad Fellowship Program (2005), to continue evolving American higher

education, study abroad should become a norm, not an exception. Study abroad will increase global awareness and internationalization.

Less than five percent of college students will participate in a study abroad before they graduate. Many of the students who do choose to participate in study abroad will only partake in a short-term trip (Chieffo & Griffiths, 2004). While long-term study abroad seems increasingly important, previous research typically focuses on short-term programs. Ultimately this study found short-term programs have an impact on students and are necessary in increasing global awareness.

Personal Perspective: International experiences provide students with many areas in which they can grow personally. It was seen by Oppen, Teichler, and Carlson (1990) that students who participate in international experiences deepen their cultural awareness, improve their communication skills, and gain confidence in speaking a foreign language. Chieffo and Griffiths (2004) found that study abroad impacts both the students' intellectual lives and their personal lives. Data indicated students who spent at least one month abroad gained confidence in their knowledge on international issues and were more confident than the students who chose not to participate in a study abroad. This infers the longer a student studies abroad, the more confidence they will acquire.

Researchers at Michigan State University set out to determine the impact study abroad has on student learning. Students were surveyed over five different categories including intercultural awareness, personal growth, academic performance, language learning, and professional development (Ingraham & Peterson, 2004). Students were encouraged to reflect on their experience abroad and identify the impacts their experience

left on them. Ingraham and Peterson (2004) noted data which showed a correlation between higher grade point average and participating in study abroad. They noted that study abroad does not necessarily create a higher grade point average, however it may be due to students with higher grade point average having more motivation to participate.

Research suggests students who study abroad for a longer period of time reap more benefits than students who study abroad for a short period of time. Findings from this research indicated students who participated in a full-year study abroad program had increased confidence in language skills due to the cultural immersion (Dwyer, 2004). Another important finding Dwyer identified was that lasting relationships were able to develop and impact the students who participated in a long term study abroad experience. This can be beneficial for personal reasons, but can also be a quality employers are looking for when hiring.

Employment Perspective: The number of businesses becoming involved with international work is increasing. Businesses are becoming more involved with importing and exporting goods (Redmann, Schupp, & Richardson, 1998) and employers are seeking out hireable candidates who are familiar with international issues or who have participated in international experiences including study abroad. Employers desire to hire employees who are willing to adapt to international aspects and who have had experience interacting with a variety of cultures. Employers are expecting college graduates to understand international concepts and understand what is going on throughout the world (Bunch, Lamm, Israel, & Edwards, 2013). This means students who have participated in study abroad or international experiences will be of dynamic benefit to an employer.

Students who participate in long-term study abroad programs are more likely to expand on their current majors after returning from a trip. This could mean adding a minor in a language, which will make them more marketable to an employer, or completely changing their major to a field that is more focused on international business (Dwyer, 2004). By studying abroad for a longer period of time, students may become more marketable due to the extra time to engage in a new aspect of study.

Introduction to Motivators and Barriers

Many different characteristics are considered by a student when deciding whether or not to participate in a study abroad program or international experience. These characteristics can be barriers, but they can also be motivators. It was found the country itself as well as the language spoken within the country were fairly important in the decision making process of the interested students. According to Martinez (2011), word of mouth can play an important role for students interested in study abroad opportunities. Older students who have participated in study abroad can be paired with younger students and can provoke a desire in the younger students to take part in an international opportunity. Acquiring a support system, especially in a transition period such as freshman year, seems to play an important role when students are determining whether or not to participate in an international experience.

Studies have been done at Louisiana State University, Texas Tech University, the University of Florida and a variety of other universities in America examining different motivators, barriers, and characteristics which go into international experiences in order to determine what students are seeking in an international experience. While there are

many barriers prevent student from participating in study abroad and international experiences, 76.3% of the students surveyed in a study carried out by Danjean, Bunch, and Blackburn (2015) indicated they had interest in participating in international opportunities. The authors indicate if faculty chose to work alongside the interested students to find scholarships and relay the expectations that come with participation, then students would be more willing and able to participate in these international experiences. This research focused solely on freshmen at Louisiana State University and left out a majority of the students with higher classifications. Another study was conducted at the University of Florida among the College of Agriculture and Life Science Students. The data collected indicated that overall students found international competence important (Irani, Place, & Friedel, 2006). Increasing opportunities for international experiences can benefit not only the countries, but also research and the students directly. Acker and Scanes (2000) concluded through their research that if an international experience is provided to students, the quality of research and education will be improved. Specific motivators and barriers which influence students on whether or not they participate in a study abroad experience will be discussed.

Motivators

There are many motivators that can positively influence students to participate in international experiences. Bobbitt and Akers (2013) found students who were encouraged by friends, family, and faculty to participate in international opportunities were more willing to take part in an international experience. They also found students who were more confident and had high self-assurance would be more likely to participate and would be more successful when participating in a study abroad opportunity. They also

determined once a student participates, it is likely they will gain confidence and an eagerness to participate in an international experience. Ultimately, major external influences, such as friends, family and faculty, can motivate students to participate in study abroad programs and ultimately increase rates of study abroad participation. According to Danjean, Bunch, and Blackburn (2015), the most important motivation was the idea that an international experience looks good on a resume and that the participant gains beneficial life experience from the opportunity. Likewise, Briers, Shinn, and Nguyen (2010) found most students are motivated due to the life experience an international opportunity provides. It is also enticing for students to live in another culture and gain experience. These opportunities develop a more globally aware student. One other motivator found in this study was the idea of being more employable due to the international experience. Students feel more motivated to participate when they recognize the direct impact an international experience can have on them.

Bunch, Lamm, Israel, and Edwards (2013) data revealed many of the students who had participated in more international experiences while in college perceived a greater number of motivations to participate in study abroad than barriers to hinder participation. This suggests the more exposure a student has to international experiences, the more likely they see the benefit in participating in a study abroad opportunity. Involving more students in international experiences could cause an increase in students seeing motivations to participate.

A study conducted at Louisiana State University indicated students found overall life experience to be very important when considering participation in a study abroad. Students ultimately are motivated to participate in a study abroad due to the experience

they gain. The study also revealed students felt that a study abroad makes them more marketable to an employer and they are motivated to participate in order to put it on a resume. Overall, students had many perceived motivations, such as increased employability, learn another language, and the opportunity to live in another country, when choosing to participate in a study abroad experience they found to be at least somewhat important (Bunch, Blackburn, DanJean, Stair, & Blanchard, 2015).

Respondents in a study conducted in 2005 indicated reasons why they had decided to participate in a study abroad experience. The respondents were asked what motivated them to choose to participate in a study abroad and the researchers found there were three main reasons students decided to participate. They found students believed it was a good opportunity to be immersed in another culture, to travel, and they found the country in which they were going to be living interesting (Van Hoof & Verbeeten, 2005). This study suggests students are motivated by convenience and comfortability. They also found that 95 percent of the respondents indicated they would study abroad again if the chance presented itself. This data shows that students who have previously participated in a study abroad may indicate more motivators than students who have not had prior experience with study abroad (Van Hoof & Verbeeten, 2005). Having students who participated in study abroad connect with students who have never participated in order to share the benefits and experiences they had could motivate other students to participate which could increase the rate of participation in study abroad among universities.

Barriers

While motivating factors can be examined and analyzed to increase rates of participation in international experiences, barriers play a detrimental role in deterring students from participating. There are many barriers that could hinder students when it comes to participating in international experiences such as study abroad. Researchers have found one of the most influential barriers when it comes to participation in study abroad is affordability (Bobbitt & Akers, 2013; Briers, Shinn, & Nguyen, 2010; Spiering & Erickson, 2006). Study abroad is an opportunity that comes with a financial obligation. There is consistency in previous research that leads researchers to believe cost and affordability is the most influential aspect when deciding whether or not to participate in an international experience (Briers et al., 2010; Bunch et al., 2015). International experiences are often expensive and students are frequently unable to afford the programs without financial assistance. Danjean, Bunch, and Blackburn (2015) noted despite efforts that have been implemented in order to increase participation in international experiences, the number of students participating in these international opportunities is increasing at a slower rate than desired. The cost of a study abroad opportunity does not only have to be a barrier, but it could be seen as a motivator if the price is affordable for the students. However, if the price is too high and there are not enough financial assistance opportunities that students are aware of, then this aspect could potentially be a barrier hindering students' participation.

Another barrier that should be considered is geographical location of the students participating. A study conducted by Bunch, Lamm, Israel, and Edwards (2013) focused on students attending the University of Florida and Oklahoma State University. They

found students at the University of Florida were more likely to participate in a study abroad experience than students attending Oklahoma State University. Their data indicated students who attend a university that is closer to international destinations are more willing to participate in study abroad opportunities. The researchers also found students at the University of Florida who grew up in a larger city perceived more barriers than students who grew up in more rural areas (Bunch, Lamm, Israel, & Edwards, 2013). Considering the geographical location of where students attend university and where students are originally from is vital when developing study abroad programs in order to minimize geographical barriers.

In a study conducted by Irani, Place, and Friedel (2006), students were surveyed in order to determine common barriers found among them. Overall, students found the time commitment required for participation in a study abroad was a barrier. Respondents stated that they felt that study abroad required too much of a time commitment and does not allow for ample time to complete their plans of study. They felt as if adding more credit hours to their current plans of study hinders them from graduating in a desired amount of time. Students often find themselves too busy with school and with work to participate in a study abroad opportunity. Another aspect the respondents identified as a barrier is that they lack knowledge about the study abroad opportunities (Irani, Place, & Friedel, 2006).

Some students do not have any personal interest in participating in a study abroad and this can be one of the most influential barriers when it comes to study abroad participation. If a student has no interest in participating in a study abroad opportunity, researchers ought to determine why they lack interest in order to determine if programs

are able to be developed to entice them to participate (Bunch et al., 2015). This barrier is one that may be more difficult to address when developing study abroad programs because if a student is not interested in going to another country at all, they likely will not have anything that encourages them to participate.

For students it is necessary to be informed about international opportunities that the university offers. However, a common theme that is seen in previous research is that the faculty and staff are either equally unaware of the opportunities or that they do not find these experiences vital to impact students. Childress (2009) found there was a lack of leadership to implement internationalization plans. Without leadership setting the pace and setting goals, students cannot become fully informed about the opportunities they have within their universities. This is a barrier that hinders a student from participating. It is necessary for faculty to be informed and enthusiastic about international opportunities.

Students have shown interest in studying abroad, yet they fail to enroll and participate in study abroad programs made available through their universities (Spiering & Erickson, 2006). When students lack an understanding of how study abroad can impact them positively, they are less likely to participate in study abroad programs. It was indicated students who decided to participate in study abroad programs based their decision on the benefits they found could result from an international experience. That being said, when students did not recognize the benefits, both personally and professionally, that can come from study abroad, they were less likely to participate in a study abroad (Spiering & Erickson, 2006). Addressing these barriers mentioned can ultimately create more interest among college students and increase rates of study abroad in universities nationwide.

Study Abroad at Oklahoma State University

In 2008, Oklahoma State University set the goal to have 25% of all of its undergraduate students participate in a study abroad experience before they graduate. In 2013-2014 many of the colleges within the university were able to set this high goal and achieve it. Spears School of Business had 31% of their students' study abroad in 2013-2014. The other colleges had participation rates that were slightly lower, including the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources (27%), the College of Engineering, Architecture, and Technology (26%), the College of Human Sciences (24%), the College of Arts and Sciences (22%), and the College of Education (20%). These percentages show that as of 2013-2014, three of the four colleges have achieved the goal set forth by Oklahoma State University of having 25% of its' undergraduate degree recipients participate in study abroad before they graduate (Study Abroad, 2014). The total number of students who participated in a study abroad program at Oklahoma State University during 2013-2014 was 1056 students.

In the study abroad period of 2015-2016, the original goal was met and 26% of all of the undergraduate students at Oklahoma State participated in a study abroad program of some sort. Oklahoma State University has now implemented a 10-point international strategic plan in order to double student participation in study abroad programs. The goal was adjusted to have 50% of all students who graduate from Oklahoma State University to participate in an academic study abroad during their time at OSU. The progress that has been made is as follows: The Spears School of Business had 38% of their students' study abroad in 2015-2016, the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources (26%), the College of Arts and Sciences (24%), the College of Human Sciences (21%),

and the College of Education (14%). It is noted that more students participated in study abroad than previous years, but the percentage within each college has decreased. The only exception to this is the Spears School of Business which increased by seven percent (Study Abroad, 2016). The total number of students who participated in a study abroad program at Oklahoma State University during 2015-2016 was 1145 students. Overall, more students participated in study abroad during the 2015-2016 academic school year. This was an encouraging increase, however the student population had increased and therefore the percentage of students who participated did not increase.

The International Strategic Plan (2016) developed by Oklahoma State University consisted of 10 key goals for the internationalization of students. Colleges within the University have access to this strategic plan and are more prepared to develop specific strategies in order to increase the rate of study abroad within each of the colleges. The goals are as follows:

- (1) Double Participation in Study Abroad, International Service Learning and International Internships;
- (2) Increase the Number of International Students and Scholars to the Highest Level in 30 Years (2,200);
- (3) Enhance and Maintain Strategic International Partnerships;
- (4) Promote International Trade, Economic Development and Entrepreneurship;
- (5) Maintain and administrative structure at OSU that engages the University and broader community in all international issues affecting Oklahoma State University;
- (6) Enhance Foreign Language and Global/Cultural Scholarship;

- (7) Expand and Achieve Excellence in English as a Second Language Instruction;
- (8) Recognize, Support and Reward the International Activities of OSU Employees;
- (9) Engage with Prospective Donors and Create Awareness of Opportunities to Support Internationalization at Oklahoma State University; and
- (10) Increase the International Capacity of OSU Employees through Training Programs and International Experiences, including Fulbright Programs and International Sabbaticals.

(International Strategic Plan, 2016)

These goals set forth by Oklahoma State University are indeed ambitious. They are necessary, however, in order to reach the rate of 50% of its undergraduate students studying abroad before graduating.

International opportunities are vital to a student's overall effectiveness and ability to gain increased opportunity in the work force. According to the ICEF Monitor (2015), the United States is striving to double its numbers of participants in international experiences by the year 2018. It was noted that only about 9 percent of all undergraduate students within the United States studied abroad in 2014. This number is low and is reflected within universities nationwide.

While study abroad participation within CASNR at Oklahoma State University has increased, it has not increased at a desired rate. According to an Annual Report on Study Abroad and Travel Programs at Oklahoma State University (2016) rates of

participation in study abroad had been on a steady decline from 2008 to 2012. From 2012 to 2015 participation had increased, but only by a total of 15 students.

Theory of Planned Behavior

Ajzen's (1991) theory of planned behavior is centered around the idea that intention effects an individual's performance of a behavior. Ultimately behavioral, normative, and control beliefs of an individual influence human behavior. The behavioral beliefs include attitudes developed, whether positive or negative, in regards to the behavior in question. Another aspect of the theory of planned behavior is subjective norms which refers to the social pressure in regards to carrying out a behavior. The third aspect of the theory of planned behavior is perceived behavioral control. This refers to how hard or difficult it is to perform the behavior in question. Often times, this is assumed to reflect past choices made by the subjects. Azjen (1991) determined that the more desirable the subjective norm, the stronger the intention to perform the behavior in question.

The theory of planned behavior has been used in many studies as the theoretical framework. In studies specifically seeking out motivators and barriers influencing study abroad, this theory has been deemed helpful when it comes to understanding why students choose to participate or not in an international experience (Bunch et al., 2013; Bunch et al., 2015). In these studies, the behavioral beliefs encompassed what the students perceived about international experiences, whether positive or negative. The normative beliefs included the peer pressure students felt to participate in an international experience. And lastly, the control beliefs represented the students' beliefs on the

motivators and barriers students perceived when considering to participate in an international experience (Bunch et al., 2015).

Willingness to Pay

Another aspect of this research being conducted at Oklahoma State University was the willingness to pay method. This method allows researchers to determine what people are willing to pay in order to buy a product or participate in an activity, among other things. One study that used willingness to pay in relation to education was conducted by Mann and Henneberry (2014). The study used this method to determine preferences of students when choosing to enroll in online courses versus face to face courses. Using this method allows for a practical way to improve a product or activity, which will make that product or activity more affordable in order to maximize efficiency. The research conducted in this study followed the same method when it came to examining what students desire in an international opportunity with the hopes of increasing the rate of participation at Oklahoma State University.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Determining students' perceived preferences impacting decisions to participate in international experiences is vital when it comes to marketing these experiences to college students within a university. In order to increase the depth of global knowledge among university students, well developed international experiences need to be offered. This study examined the current rate of participation in international experiences at Oklahoma State University, identify available scholarship opportunities, and what activities students prefer in a study abroad experience. This research was conducted to identify motivators and barriers that influence students' decisions to participate in international experience.

Purpose

The primary purpose of this research was to describe the motivators and barriers of study abroad with implications of increasing the rate of participation in study abroad programs.

Institutional Review Board

Oklahoma State University policy and federal regulations require approval of any research study involving human subjects before researchers begin distribution of any materials to human subjects. The Institutional Review Board at Oklahoma State University review any material that will be distributed in order to protect the subjects participating in the research. This study was granted permission to be carried out within the proper conditions stated in the institutional review board review. The code for this study given by the institutional review board was AG1624 and a copy of the approval form can be found in Appendix A.

The institutional review board requires that research be approved before administering any instrument that collected from human subjects. A consent form was required to be read and the instrument was only completed by subjects on a volunteer basis. This consent form can be found in Appendix B.

Objectives

There were five specific objectives of this research including:

- (1) identify the personal and educational characteristics of students who participated in this study within the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources at Oklahoma State University;
- (2) determine the barriers to participation in international opportunities;
- (3) determine the motivators to participation in international opportunities;

(4) determine what students are willing to pay for participation in an international opportunity; and

(5) identify the activities students prefer in an international opportunity.

Sample Population

The population included students within the CASNR at Oklahoma State University. Academic status ranged from freshmen, sophomore, juniors, seniors, and graduate students. To determine the population for this research study, the convenience sampling technique was applied. According to Etikan, Musa, and Alkassim, (2016), convenience sampling is a nonrandom sampling where the target population meet the requirements of participating in the research. Convenience sampling has numerous benefits, such as the participants being readily available to participate. In some cases, convenience samples can be considered “accidental samples” due to the selected requirements that researcher is seeking to identify. While there are benefits of using a convenience sample, there are disadvantages to implementing it. When using a convenience sample, there is a possibility that the population could be biased. This disadvantage should be considered when analyzing data. It is also very important, when using a convenience sample, to describe the characteristics of the respondents (Johnson, & Christensen, 2014). While convenience sampling is not the most desired method to use, it is often used due to restraints encountered by the researchers.

Research Instrument

The research instrument used in this study was adapted from a study conducted by J. C. Bunch (2015). Bunch’s study examined the perceived motivators and barriers to

participation in international experiences at Louisiana State University. The instrument used in the original study consisted of 76 total items that were divided into six different sections. Only 66 of the items were examined in the original study. The modified instrument used in this research consisted of 78 total items which were divided into seven sections. The sections included (1) student interest in participating in study abroad, (2) desired location to study abroad, (3) desired activities to participate in while involved in a study abroad, (4) perceived motivators to participate in a study abroad, (5) perceived barriers to participate in a study abroad, (6) personal and educational characteristics (Bunch et al., 2015), (7) and students' willingness to pay to participate in a study abroad. Students were also asked to indicate their grade point average and whether or not they were studying at Oklahoma State University on an F1 Student Visa. A copy of the research instrument can be found in Appendix D.

Many of the sections included in the research instrument implemented a 4-point anchored scale in which students indicated agreement or appeal on items listed. According to Johnson and Christensen (2014), using a scale with no middle alternative forces respondents to choose a side. Using this technique does not allow "fence-sitting" which leads to less ambiguous data. The downfall with this scale is that respondents may feel frustrated if they genuinely hold a neutral attitude concerning an issue.

Data Collection Procedure

The first section of the research instrument was written in order to identify CASNR student interest in participating in a study abroad. Items included in this section were: (a) are you personally interested in participating in a study abroad, (b) how

important is studying abroad, (c) how much time would you prefer to spend on a study abroad, and (d) what do you think is the most suitable academic level for participation in a study abroad? The second section addressed the desired locations that students would like to study abroad. The section used a four-point anchored scale (1 = *Not Appealing*, 2 = *Not Very Appealing*, 3 = *Somewhat Appealing*, and 4 = *Very Appealing*) to identify what general locations students would want when participating in a study abroad experience.

The third section was used to identify what activities students desired to participate in while studying abroad. A four-point anchored scale (1 = *Not Important*, 2 = *Not Very Important*, 3 = *Somewhat Important*, and 4 = *Very Important*) was used to identify what activities students find important when deciding on whether or not to participate in study abroad. A few activities included in this section were: (a) in-field lectures and labs, (b) staying with a host family, (c) speaking and learning host country language, and (d) sightseeing.

The fourth section asked participating students to indicate their agreement or disagreement with 15 barrier items. A four-point anchored scale (1 = *Strongly Disagree*, 2 = *Disagree*, 3 = *Agree*, and 4 = *Strongly Agree*) was used to determine how much students agreed or disagreed with the different barriers mentioned. These barriers included: (a) I am too busy with school, (b) I do not see the need to study abroad, (c) I cannot afford to participate in study abroad opportunities, (d) and I am concerned that a study abroad opportunity will impact my personal relationships. Similarly, the fifth section asked participating students to indicate importance of 10 motivator items. A four-point anchored scale (1 = *Not Important*, 2 = *Not Very Important*, 3 = *Somewhat*

Important, and 4 = *Very Important*) was used to determine what motivating factors were most important to students when deciding whether or not to participate in a study abroad experience. These motivating factors included: (a) increased employability, (b) overall life experience, (c) looks good on a resume, and (d) opportunity to work in another country after completing current degree. In both of these sections, the upper 95% and the lower 95% were determined in order to test confidence and significance. The upper and lower limits indicate that 95% of the time that this question is asked, the mean of the answer will fall between the upper 95% and the lower 95%. This upper and lower limit build confidence in the statistic. If the upper 95% of one mean does not overlap with the lower 95% of the item with the higher mean, then it is likely that when the survey is distributed that the item with the higher mean will be chosen over then items with lower means.

The sixth section examined what students are willing to pay in order to participate in a study abroad opportunity. Students were asked to select how much they would be willing to pay to study abroad. Choices were (a) \$0 - \$999, (b) \$1,000 - \$1,999, (c) \$2,000 - \$2,999, (d) \$3,000 – \$3,999, (e) \$4,000 - \$4,999, and (f) \$5,000 or more. They were also asked to identify what level of scholarship would be required to participate in a study abroad. They were asked to choose between (a) 0% - lack of money is not a deterrent in my situation, (b) 1-25% of total cost, (c) 26-50% of total cost, (d) 51-75% of total cost, (e) 76-99% of total cost, and (f) 100% - a full scholarship is my only option for participation.

The seventh and final section focused on personal and educational aspects of the students participating in the research. Components of this section included academic status, ethnicity, gender, and cumulative GPA.

Selected professors were contacted via phone call within CASNR at Oklahoma State University. Six professors allowed the instrument to be distributed at the beginning of their classes. The distributor explained the purpose of the research following a script that can be found in Appendix C. After explaining the purpose, the instrument was distributed to every student in eight different sections of selected courses. Courses included: Introduction to Plant and Soil Sciences, Senior Engineering Design Project I, International Agricultural Markets and Trade, Fundamentals of Food Science, Animal Genetics, and Capstone for Animal Agriculture. This variety of courses allowed research to cover a wide array of students in varying degree programs within CASNR.

Completed surveys were given an identification number and results were input to Excel to be analyzed. Surveys that were incomplete or were completed by international students who are on an F1 student visa were discarded. Responses from the completed, usable surveys were coded and entered an Excel file. No names were given from the respondents in any of the sections. This ensured anonymity of the respondents. After the data from the completed, usable surveys were input into Excel, the collected research instruments were stored in a locked cabinet and data was password protected to ensure confidentiality.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

Purpose

The primary purpose of this research was describe motivators and barriers of study abroad with implications of increasing the rate of participation in study abroad programs.

Objectives

The five specific objectives of this research included:

- (1) identify the personal and educational characteristics of students who participated in this study within the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources at Oklahoma State University;
- (2) determine the barriers to participation in international opportunities;
- (3) determine the motivators to participation in international opportunities;
- (4) determine what students are willing to pay for participation in an international opportunity; and
- (5) identify the activities students prefer in an international opportunity.

In the Fall of 2016 at Oklahoma State University 524 surveys were distributed to students within CASNR. Of the 524 distributed surveys, 400 were completed and usable for a response rate of 76.3%. Surveys that were incomplete or were completed by international students on F1 Visas (6.29%) were discarded and not included in the data analysis.

Research Objective 1

To address the first research objective, identifying the personal and educational characteristics of students within CASNR at Oklahoma State University, academic status, gender, ethnicity, academic major, and GPA were identified. Of the respondents 27.5% were freshmen, 23.75% were sophomores, 16.5% were juniors, 31.25% were seniors, and 1% of respondents were graduate students. There were 133 (33.25%) male respondents and 267 (66.75%) female respondents. The majority (83.25%) of the students surveyed identified as White (Non-Hispanic). The next largest group of students (6.25%) identified as multiracial. The rest of the groups were as follows: Native American (5.5%), Hispanic (3%), African American (1.25%), and Asian (0.75%). Many academic majors were surveyed within CASNR. Most of the students were majoring in Animal Science (36.25%). Another large group of students identified as a double-major (20.75%), focusing their time on two different subject areas. The third largest major indicated by the respondents was Agribusiness (10.25%). When examining GPA, 26.25% of respondents reported a GPA between 3.75 and 4.00. There were 18% of respondents who stated this was their first semester at Oklahoma State University and did not have a cumulative GPA. 16% of the students stated they had a cumulative GPA between 3.50 and 3.74. There were no students who indicated they had a GPA of 1.99 and below. Overall, 54.5%

of the students indicated having a GPA of 3.25 or higher. This table also lists the percent of males and females in both CASNR and Oklahoma State as a whole. It was seen there are fewer males in CASNR than females, which is not the same for the population of Oklahoma State University. The distribution of students within the level classification ranged from freshmen to graduate students. There was a small response from the Juniors in the sample population, however there is an even distribution among the levels within CASNR as well as the entire population at Oklahoma State University. A summary of these findings are found in Table 1.

Students current financial aid assistance status is referenced in Table 2. Data indicated 53.25% of the respondents received federal financial aid assistance and 75% of the respondents indicated they have received some form of scholarships.

Table 1.
Characteristics of CASNR Student Respondents

Characteristic	% of Sample	% of CASNR Students	% of OSU Population
Gender			
Male	33.25	44.00	50.90
Female	66.75	56.00	49.10
Level			
Freshmen	27.00	21.23	20.02
Sophomore	23.75	21.26	18.43
Junior	16.50	21.98	20.96
Senior	31.25	21.33	21.97
Graduate	1.00	14.13	15.43
Ethnicity			
White (Non-Hispanic)	83.25	73.15	70.70
Multiracial	6.25	7.84	7.90
American Indian	5.50	5.28	5.20
Hispanic	3.00	4.82	5.50
African American	1.25	1.84	4.80
Asian	0.75	0.82	1.60
Major			
Animal Science	36.25		
Double Major	20.75		
Agribusiness	10.25		
Pre-Professional Programs	6.25		
Agricultural Education	5.25		
Biochemistry and Molecular Biology	4.25		
Biosystems Engineering	4.25		
Agricultural Communications	3.50		
Plant and Soil Sciences	3.25		
Food Science	2.50		
Agricultural Economics	1.75		
NREM	1.00		
GPA			
3.75-4.00	26.25		
3.50-3.74	16.00		
3.25-3.49	12.25		
3.00-3.25	13.25		
2.75-2.99	7.00		
2.50-2.74	4.75		
2.25-2.49	2.00		
2.00-2.24	0.50		
1.99 and below	0.00		
1 st Semester	18.00		

Table 2.

Student Current Financial Aid Assistance

Financial Assistance Status	Percent of Students
Federal Financial Aid Assistance	
Yes	53.25
No	46.75
Oklahoma Promise (OHLAP) Recipient	
Yes	14.75
No	85.25
Recipient of any other scholarships	
Yes	75.00
No	25.00

Research Objective 2

The second research objective was to determine the barriers to participation in international opportunities. The research instrument included 15 unique perceived barriers students rated from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Students were asked to rate each barrier on a four-point anchored scale (1 = *Strongly Disagree*, 2 = *Disagree*, 3 = *Agree*, and 4 = *Strongly Agree*). The results are listed in Table 3. It is noted that 95 percent of the time, every time the survey is distributed, affordability will be an influential barrier over the other barrier options. The same can be said about the lack of time students perceive. 95 percent of the time, every time the survey is distributed, lack of time will be more influential than other barriers aside from affordability.

Table 4 and Table 5 identify perceived barriers by male student respondents and female student respondents respectively. It was indicated males perceive more barriers than female perceive. One barrier statement males agreed with was “I am too busy with

work.” This was a barrier females did not indicate agreement with. Females, on the other hand, indicated affordability was a stronger barrier than males indicated.

Table 6 and Table 7 identify perceived barriers by students who have not previously participated in a study abroad experience and students who have previously participated in a study abroad experience respectively. Of the respondents who had previously participated in study abroad experiences, there were no barrier statements that were agreed with. This indicated students who had previously participated in these experiences do not strongly perceive barriers to studying abroad.

Table 3.

Perceived Barriers to Study Abroad Participation by Students at Oklahoma State University

Barriers	M	SD	Interpretation	Lower 95% ^a	Upper 95% ^a
I cannot afford to participate in study abroad opportunities	2.77	.85	Agree	2.69	2.85
I am too busy with school	2.57	.76	Agree	2.50	2.65
I am too busy with work	2.42	.83	Disagree	2.34	2.50
I am not aware of study abroad opportunities	2.11	.83	Disagree	2.03	2.19
I am intimidated by the thought of engaging in a study abroad opportunity	1.98	.78	Disagree	1.90	2.05
Academic departments do not encourage me to participate in study abroad opportunities	1.92	.73	Disagree	1.85	1.99
I do not see the need to study abroad	1.92	.77	Disagree	1.84	1.99
A study abroad opportunity will not have an impact on my future career	1.89	.78	Disagree	1.82	1.97
I am concerned that a study abroad opportunity will impact my personal relationships	1.83	.78	Disagree	1.75	1.91
Studying abroad will not help me academically	1.82	.74	Disagree	1.74	1.89
I am not self-motivated to participate in study abroad opportunities	1.82	.77	Disagree	1.71	1.89
My parents do not approve of study abroad opportunity	1.78	.74	Disagree	1.71	1.85
The culture of the university does not support me in study abroad opportunities	1.74	.62	Disagree	1.68	1.80
I am satisfied with the world I live in and do not see a need to travel	1.69	.72	Disagree	1.62	1.76
I am not interested in learning about other cultures	1.61	.68	Disagree	1.55	1.68

^aUpper and lower 95% indicates that 95% of the time every time the survey is distributed the mean will fall between the two limits.

Table 4.

Perceived Barriers to Study Abroad Participation by Male Student Respondents at Oklahoma State University

Barriers	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
I cannot afford to participate in study abroad opportunities	2.71	0.80	Agree
I am too busy with school	2.70	0.71	Agree
I am too busy with work	2.67	0.84	Agree
I am not aware of study abroad opportunities	2.24	0.78	Disagree
I do not see the need to study abroad	2.16	0.82	Disagree
A study abroad opportunity will not have an impact on my future career	2.08	0.82	Disagree
I am not self-motivated to participate in study abroad opportunities	2.07	0.75	Disagree
Academic departments do not encourage me to participate in study abroad opportunities	2.03	0.75	Disagree
I am concerned that a study abroad opportunity will impact my personal relationships	2.02	0.82	Disagree
Studying abroad will not help me academically	1.98	0.72	Disagree
I am intimidated by the thought of engaging in a study abroad opportunity	1.95	0.72	Disagree
I am satisfied with the world I live in and do not see a need to travel	1.93	0.76	Disagree
The culture of the university does not support me in study abroad opportunities	1.84	0.63	Disagree
My parents do not approve of study abroad opportunities	1.80	0.68	Disagree
I am not interested in learning about other cultures	1.78	0.72	Disagree

Table 5.

Perceived Barriers to Study Abroad Participation by Female Student Respondents at Oklahoma State University

Barriers	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
I cannot afford to participate in study abroad opportunities	2.80	0.87	Agree
I am too busy with school	2.51	0.78	Agree
I am too busy with work	2.30	0.79	Disagree
I am not aware of study abroad opportunities	2.04	0.78	Disagree
I am intimidated by the thought of engaging in a study abroad opportunity	1.99	0.80	Disagree
Academic departments do not encourage me to participate in study abroad opportunities	1.86	0.71	Disagree
A study abroad opportunity will not have an impact on my future career	1.80	0.74	Disagree
I do not see the need to study abroad	1.79	0.72	Disagree
My parents do not approve of study abroad opportunity	1.77	0.77	Disagree
Studying abroad will not help me academically	1.73	0.73	Disagree
I am concerned that a study abroad opportunity will impact my personal relationships	1.73	0.7	Disagree
The culture of the university does not support me in study abroad opportunities	1.69	0.62	Disagree
I am not self-motivated to participate in study abroad opportunities	1.69	0.75	Disagree
I am satisfied with the world I live in and do not see a need to travel	1.56	0.67	Disagree
I am not interested in learning about other cultures	1.53	0.64	Disagree

Table 6.

Perceived Barriers to Study Abroad Participation by Student Respondents at Oklahoma State University Who Have Not Previously Participated in Study Abroad

Barriers	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
I cannot afford to participate in study abroad opportunities	2.85	0.82	Agree
I am too busy with school	2.64	0.73	Agree
I am too busy with work	2.48	0.82	Disagree
I am not aware of study abroad opportunities	2.16	0.77	Disagree
I am intimidated by the thought of engaging in a study abroad opportunity	2.03	0.77	Disagree
I do not see the need to study abroad	1.98	0.77	Disagree
Academic departments do not encourage me to participate in study abroad opportunities	1.96	0.71	Disagree
A study abroad opportunity will not have an impact on my future career	1.91	0.77	Disagree
I am concerned that a study abroad opportunity will impact my personal relationships	1.88	0.76	Disagree
Studying abroad will not help me academically	1.86	0.72	Disagree
I am not self-motivated to participate in study abroad opportunities	1.86	0.78	Disagree
My parents do not approve of study abroad opportunities	1.82	0.73	Disagree
The culture of the university does not support me in study abroad opportunities	1.75	0.61	Disagree
I am satisfied with the world I live in and do not see a need to travel	1.72	0.73	Disagree
I am not interested in learning about other cultures	1.65	0.68	Disagree

Table 7.

Perceived Barriers to Study Abroad Participation by Student Respondents at Oklahoma State University Who Have Previously Participated in Study Abroad

Barriers	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
I cannot afford to participate in study abroad opportunities	2.12	0.77	Disagree
I am too busy with school	2.00	0.77	Disagree
I am too busy with work	1.90	0.69	Disagree
A study abroad opportunity will not have an impact on my future career	1.74	0.89	Disagree
I am not aware of study abroad opportunities	1.69	0.78	Disagree
The culture of the university does not support me in study abroad opportunities	1.64	0.76	Disagree
Academic departments do not encourage me to participate in study abroad opportunities	1.57	0.80	Disagree
I am intimidated by the thought of engaging in a study abroad opportunity	1.48	0.67	Strongly Disagree
I am not self-motivated to participate in study abroad opportunities	1.45	0.59	Strongly Disagree
Studying abroad will not help me academically	1.45	0.77	Strongly Disagree
My parents do not approve of study abroad opportunities	1.43	0.77	Strongly Disagree
I am concerned that a study abroad opportunity will impact my personal relationships	1.43	0.77	Strongly Disagree
I do not see the need to study abroad	1.38	0.58	Strongly Disagree
I am satisfied with the world I live in and do not see a need to travel	1.36	0.53	Strongly Disagree
I am not interested in learning about other cultures	1.29	0.51	Strongly Disagree

Research Objective 3

The third research objective was to determine the motivators to participation in international opportunities. The research instrument involved 10 different perceived motivators students rated from not important to very important. Students were asked to rate each barrier on a four-point anchored scale (1 = *Not Important*, 2 = *Not Very Important*, 3 = *Somewhat Important*, and 4 = *Very Important*). The results are listed in Table 8. In this Table, the lower 95 percent and the upper 95 percent were calculated. The main result from this section was students found overall life experience the most important motivator in making a decision on whether or not to participate in a study abroad experience. It was discovered overall life experience has a higher mean 95 percent of the time every time the survey is distributed than the other perceived motivators listed.

Table 9 and Table 10 identify male and female respondents respectively to motivators perceived to participate in study abroad. Ultimately, there was not significant difference between male and female respondents when indicated perceived motivators. Table 11 and 12, on the other had have great differences. Table 11 includes results from students who have not previously participated in study abroad. The motivators found most important to these respondents were ones that directly impact their employability and life. However, looking at Table 12, which includes results from students who have previously participated in study abroad, respondents are more motivated by aspects that develop them as a person. While they find aspects such as increased employability as important, overall life experience and personal development are indicated as more motivating to these respondents.

Students were asked to identify which countries appealed to them using a four-point anchored scale (1 = *Not Appealing*, 2 = *Not Very Appealing*, 3 = *Somewhat Appealing*, and 4 = *Very Appealing*). The results are presented in Table 13. The two locations were indicated as very appealing were Australia/New Zealand and Europe. There were two locations students indicated as not very appealing and those were India and North America.

Students were asked to identify their preferred time spent on a study abroad experience. Students were able to choose from ranges, 1-3 weeks, 4-6 weeks, 11-15 weeks, full semester, 6 months to 1 year, or none. 44.30% of the respondents indicated they prefer to spend 1 to 3 weeks when participating in a study abroad experience. Five percent of respondents had no desire in participating and indicated they prefer to spend no time on a study abroad experience. Students preferences are listed on Table 14.

Table 8.

Perceived Motivations to Study Abroad Participation by Students at Oklahoma State University

Motivations	M	SD	Interpretation	Lower 95% ^a	Upper 95% ^a
Overall life experience	3.56	.62	Very Important	3.52	3.65
Looks good on a resume	3.30	.76	Somewhat Important	3.21	3.38
Increase employability	3.29	.72	Somewhat Important	3.22	3.37
Important stage in my personal development	3.21	.80	Somewhat Important	3.13	3.28
Learn more about my academic specialization	3.14	.80	Somewhat Important	3.06	3.22
Opportunity to work in another country after completing current degree	3.09	.89	Somewhat Important	3.00	3.18
Get a graduate degree	2.98	.92	Somewhat Important	2.89	3.07
Learn another language	2.96	.86	Somewhat Important	2.87	3.04
Opportunity to live in another country or culture	2.89	.93	Somewhat Important	2.80	2.98
Importance placed by academic advisor/department	2.82	.82	Somewhat Important	2.74	2.90

^aUpper and lower 95% indicates that 95% of the time every time the survey is distributed the mean will fall between the two limits.

Table 9.

Perceived Motivations to Study Abroad Participation by Male Student Respondents at Oklahoma State University

Motivations	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
Overall life experience	3.68	0.53	Very Important
Increased employability	3.39	0.71	Somewhat Important
Looks good on a resume	3.36	0.70	Somewhat Important
Important stage in my personal development	3.30	0.76	Somewhat Important
Learn more about my academic specialization	3.25	0.78	Somewhat Important
Opportunity to live in another country or culture	3.19	0.88	Somewhat Important
Get a graduate degree	3.06	0.93	Somewhat Important
Learn another language	3.03	0.85	Somewhat Important
Importance placed by academic advisor/department	3.01	0.91	Somewhat Important
Opportunity to work in another country after completing current degree	2.90	0.82	Somewhat Important

Table 10.

Perceived Motivations to Study Abroad Participation by Female Student Respondents at Oklahoma State University

Motivations	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
Overall life experience	3.39	0.74	Very Important
Looks good on a resume	3.17	0.76	Somewhat Important
Increased employability	3.14	0.83	Somewhat Important
Important stage in my personal development	3.02	0.83	Somewhat Important
Learn more about my academic specialization	2.93	0.81	Somewhat Important
Opportunity to live in another country or culture	2.89	0.87	Somewhat Important
Get a graduate degree	2.80	0.89	Somewhat Important
Learn another language	2.81	0.85	Somewhat Important
Opportunity to work in another country after completing current degree	2.67	0.80	Somewhat Important
Importance placed by academic advisor/department	2.66	0.92	Somewhat Important

Table 11.

Perceived Motivations to Study Abroad Participation by Student Respondents at Oklahoma State University Who Have Not Previously Participated in Study Abroad

Motivations	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
Overall life experience	3.56	0.63	Very Important
Looks good on a resume	3.31	0.75	Somewhat Important
Increased employability	3.29	0.71	Somewhat Important
Important stage in my personal development	3.16	0.80	Somewhat Important
Learn more about my academic specialization	3.14	0.80	Somewhat Important
Opportunity to live in another country or culture	3.04	0.90	Somewhat Important
Get a graduate degree	2.97	0.92	Somewhat Important
Learn another language	2.93	0.86	Somewhat Important
Opportunity to work in another country after completing current degree	2.85	0.93	Somewhat Important
Importance placed by academic advisor/department	2.82	0.81	Somewhat Important

Table 12.

Perceived Motivations to Study Abroad Participation by Student Respondents at Oklahoma State University Who Have Previously Participated in Study Abroad

Motivations	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
Overall life experience	3.76	0.58	Very Important
Important stage in my personal development	3.57	0.63	Very Important
Opportunity to live in another country or culture	3.48	0.63	Somewhat Important
Increased employability	3.36	0.82	Somewhat Important
Opportunity to work in another country after completing current degree	3.24	0.88	Somewhat Important
Looks good on a resume	3.26	0.86	Somewhat Important
Learn another language	3.19	0.83	Somewhat Important
Learn more about my academic specialization	3.19	0.86	Somewhat Important
Get a graduate degree	2.98	0.95	Somewhat Important
Importance placed by academic advisor/department	2.86	0.90	Somewhat Important

Table 13.

Appeal of Locations for Study Abroad Perceived by Students

Location	M	SD	Interpretation	Lower 95% ^a	Upper 95% ^a
Australia/New Zealand	3.74	0.53	Very Appealing	3.68	3.79
Europe	3.56	0.66	Very Appealing	3.49	3.62
South Pacific	3.05	0.86	Somewhat Appealing	2.97	3.14
South America	3.03	0.86	Somewhat Appealing	2.94	3.11
Central America	2.88	0.89	Somewhat Appealing	2.79	2.97
Africa	2.79	1.02	Somewhat Appealing	2.69	2.89
Asia	2.53	0.97	Somewhat Appealing	2.43	2.62
India	2.45	1.02	Not Very Appealing	2.35	2.55
North America	2.38	1.00	Not Very Appealing	2.28	2.47

^aUpper and lower 95% indicates that 95% of the time every time the survey is distributed, the mean will fall between the two limits.

Table 14.

Students Preferred Time Spent on Study Abroad Experience

Length of Time	Percent of Students
1 to 3 Weeks	44.50%
4 to 6 Weeks	28.50%
11 to 15 Weeks	4.00%
Full Semester	14.75%
6 Months to 1 Year	3.25%
None	5.00%

Research Objective 4

The fourth research objective was set forth in order to determine what students are willing to pay in order to participate in a study abroad experience. Students were asked to select between various ranges of what they would be willing to pay to participate in a study abroad program. Over half of the respondents (51.50%) indicated they would be willing to pay anywhere between \$1,000 and \$2,999 to participate in a study abroad. Students were also asked to indicate how much scholarship assistance they would need in order to participate. Likewise, over half of the respondents (53.25%) indicated they would need between 26% and 75% of the cost of the trip to be covered via scholarship opportunities. This aligned with their willingness to pay selections. The results are listed in Table 15 and Table 16.

Table 15.

Students Willingness to Pay to Participate in a Study Abroad

WTP	n	%	Inverse Cumulative %
\$0-\$999	80	20.00	100
\$1000-\$1999	121	30.25	80
\$2000-\$2999	85	21.25	49.75
\$3000-\$3999	70	17.50	28.50
\$4000-\$4999	18	4.50	11.00
\$5000 or more	26	6.50	6.50
Total	400	100	

Table 16.

Percent Scholarship Preferred by Students to Participate in a Study Abroad

Scholarship Need	n	%
0%	16	4.00
1-25%	25	6.25
26-50%	92	23.00
51-75%	121	30.25
76-99%	80	20.00
100%	66	16.50
Total	400	100

Research Objective 5

The fifth and final research objective was to identify the activities included in an international opportunity that students most desire. Students rated activities on a scale of very important to not important. Students were asked to rate each activity when deciding on whether or not to participate in a study abroad. Results from this section are found in Table 17.

Table 17.

Important Activities Included in Study Abroad Programs for Students at Oklahoma State University

Characteristics	M	SD	Interpretation	Lower 95% ^a	Upper 95% ^a
Acquiring hands-on experience and skills	3.73	.58	Very Important	3.67	3.78
Learning about a different culture	3.56	.66	Very Important	3.50	3.63
Traveling in country	3.53	.71	Very Important	3.46	3.60
Sightseeing	3.53	.69	Very Important	3.46	3.60
Taking courses related to your major	3.51	.72	Very Important	3.43	3.58
Free time to do what you want	3.49	.68	Somewhat Important	3.42	3.56
Socializing with citizens of host country	3.46	.71	Somewhat Important	3.39	3.53
Working one-on-one with professors and students	3.38	.73	Somewhat Important	3.30	3.45
Participating in field research	3.27	.81	Somewhat Important	3.19	3.35
In-field lectures and labs	3.10	.82	Somewhat Important	3.01	3.18
Speaking and learning host country language	3.04	.86	Somewhat Important	2.95	3.12
Staying with a host family	2.66	.92	Somewhat Important	2.57	2.75
Attending non-credit courses at foreign universities	2.22	.83	Not Very Important	2.14	2.30

^aUpper and lower 95% indicates that 95% of the time every time the survey is distributed the mean will fall between the two limits.

Students' Knowledge and Perceptions of Study Abroad

Students were asked multiple questions inferring their knowledge and perceptions of study abroad. Students were asked to identify the sources they had previously used to inquire about studying abroad. Students were able to select all that applied from a list including: OSU study abroad website, study abroad fair, academic advisor, flyer/magazine/newspaper, friends/word of mouth, or none. It was found that 58% of students inquire about study abroad through word of mouth or friends and that 50% of students have seen flyers, magazines, or newspapers to learn more about study abroad. It was seen that 17.25% of respondents have not used any means to inquire about study abroad opportunities.

Two other aspects students were asked to indicate were the most suitable academic level for study abroad and the desired time of year to participate in study abroad. Overall, 60% of students indicated Junior year is the most suitable for study abroad participation. As for desired time of year to study abroad, 57.25% of students identified the summer as being the most desirable time to participate. The full results from this section are found in Table 18.

Table 18.

Students Knowledge and Perceptions of Study Abroad

Knowledge and Perception Questions	n	%
Sources Used by Students to Inquire About Study Abroad		
OSU Study Abroad Website	171	42.75
Study Abroad Fair	46	11.50
Academic Advisor	83	20.75
Flyer, Magazine, Newspaper	200	50.00
Friends/Word of Mouth	232	58.00
None	69	17.25
Most Suitable Academic Level for Study Abroad		
Freshman	15	2.75
Sophomore	152	38.00
Junior	240	60.00
Senior	48	12.00
Graduate School	19	7.25
Any Level	9	2.25
Desired Time of Year to Participate in Study Abroad		
Fall Semester	49	12.25
Spring Semester	101	25.25
Summer	229	57.25
Intercession Periods	62	15.5
Any Time	5	1.25

Note. Students were able to select more than one answer for each item, which allowed for more than 100% response.

Summary

The majority of students (74.25%) indicated they were personally interested in study abroad. 77.25% of students stated that study abroad is somewhat or very important. There was a fairly even distribution between academic status ranging from freshmen to senior. The junior respondents had the lowest percentage (16.5%) of representation. Females made up the majority (66.75%) of the respondents and most of the respondents were White (Non-Hispanic) (83.25%).

When it came to identifying students' knowledge and perceptions of study abroad, 17.25% of the respondents indicated they do not use any sources to inquire about study abroad. Word of mouth was indicated as the most used source with 58% of students stating they use this method to inquire about study abroad. Students (60.00%) determined junior year is the most suitable academic level for participation in study abroad and 57.25% indicated the summer is the most desired time of year to participate in a study abroad.

When identifying perceived barriers, the two barrier statements students agreed with were "I cannot afford to participate in study abroad opportunities" and "I am too busy with school." These are the two most prominent barriers that should be addressed when developing study abroad opportunities are affordability and the time a program takes to participate in. The other options listed were not perceived as barriers by the respondents. These results are similar to previous research which stated that financial barriers and time barriers play a vital role to a student when determining whether or not to participate in a study abroad opportunity (Bobbitt & Akers, 2013; Briers, Shinn, &

Nguyen, 2010; Bunch et al., 2013; Bunch et al., 2015; Spiering & Erickson, 2006). This finding indicates that hypothesis one, which states that cost is among the most influential barrier related to enrollment rates of international experiences, is true for the CASNR students at Oklahoma State University. This strength of response to barriers of study abroad also supported hypothesis two, which stated that listed barriers are not below a mean of 2.49 on a four-point anchored scale to influence student's participation in study abroad.

When students were asked to rate the listed motivating factors, results indicated the one factor a majority of students (64.5%) found to be very important was the overall life experience that can come from participating in a study abroad. 30.75% of students found overall life experience as a somewhat important factor when deciding whether or not to study abroad. Previous research conducted by Bunch et al. (2015) found similar results in which students at Louisiana State University found overall life experience to be important when considering to participate in a study abroad. According to results from this research, data showed each motivating factor listed in the survey for students to rate was at least somewhat important to students when considering whether or not to participate in a study abroad program. This result and continued lack of participation implies the motivators have not been strong enough to outweigh students perceived barriers to participate in study abroad. This result supports hypothesis three, which stated that listed motivators are not above a mean of 3.50 on a four-point anchored scale to influence student's participation in study abroad.

As seen previously in results that financial barriers are incredibly prevalent to students participating in study abroad programs, identifying students' willingness to pay

was important. The data indicated 51.5% of students were willing to pay between \$1,000 and \$2,999. Data showed that 53.25% of the students indicated they would need between 26% and 75% of the total cost to be covered by scholarships offered through the university. Identifying students' willingness to pay is beneficial when developing study abroad programs. Program developers can take into consideration willingness to pay and strive to develop programs that are more affordable to students. Noticing the majority of students would require between 26% and 75% of the total cost to be covered by scholarships, it is also necessary to ensure students are informed of the many scholarship opportunities offered through their university. This supported hypothesis one which stated that cost is among the most influential barrier related to enrollment rates of international experiences.

Finally, there were five activities students found very important and felt that they should be included in a study abroad program. These were acquiring hands-on experiences and skills, learning about a different culture, traveling in country, sightseeing, and taking courses related to their major. If these activities are explicitly included in a study abroad program, students will be more willing to participate. They could also be willing to pay a little more in order to participate in these activities. Out of these activities found very important, only one of them was related to gaining credit in the university: taking courses related to your major. Students may find they do not need a study abroad program to achieve the other main desired activities such as sightseeing, acquiring hands-on experience and skills, learning about a differing culture, and taking courses related to their major.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Purpose

The primary purpose of this research was to describe motivators and barriers of study abroad with implications of increasing the rate of participation in study abroad programs. To conclude, the specific purposes of this research were to:

- (a) Identify the personal and educational characteristics of students who participated in this study within the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources at Oklahoma State University;
- (b) Determine the barriers to participation in international opportunities;
- (c) Determine the motivators to participation in international opportunities;
- (d) Determine what students are willing to pay for participation in an international opportunity;
- (e) Identify the activities students prefer in an international opportunity.

This research was designed to meet these research objectives and determine how CASNR at Oklahoma State University can develop study abroad programs and international experiences students will choose to participate.

Conclusions

Study abroad and international experiences are found to be extremely important within universities. As more employers seek out potential employees who possess global awareness and have a desire for internationalization, study abroad and international experiences play a vital role in student development and marketability. These programs are becoming more vital to increasing the amount of globally aware and competent students (Ludwig & McGirr, 2003; Zhai & Scheer, 2002). An increased knowledge of international agriculture policies, products, and cultures can make a student desirable to an employer. Often times students are considered unknowledgeable and are deficient when it comes to being adequately informed about agricultural policies and cultures (Redmann et al., 1998; Wingenbach et al., 2003).

Motivators and barriers are considered by students when exploring options to participate in study abroad and international opportunities. In previous research, a 76.3% of students indicated a personal interest in participating in a study abroad or international experience offered through their university (Danjean et al., 2015). Bunch et al. (2015) showed that 73.5% of students indicated a personal interest in participating in a study abroad or international experience. Students at Oklahoma State University responded similarly in their personal interest to participate in an international experience. This research identified that 74.25% of the students who participated in the survey had

personal interest. This number is similar to previous research and indicates students within universities have similar perceptions. With the interest being so high and the rate of participation being low, motivators and barriers seem to play integral roles in students' decisions on whether or not to participate.

The top two motivators indicated by CASNR students at Oklahoma State University were overall life experience gained through study abroad and study abroad looks good on a resume. These were both found to be major motivators in previous research as well (Briers et al., 2010; Bunch et al., 2015; Danjean et al., 2015). Only 10.5% of the students surveyed at Oklahoma State University had previously participated in a study abroad experience. In a similar study conducted by Bunch et al. (2013), data indicated students who have previously participated in study abroad perceived more motivators to study abroad than they perceived barriers that hinder them.

Previous research has found one of the most influential barriers to students when deciding on whether or not to participate in a study abroad opportunity is affordability (Bobbitt & Akers, 2013; Briers et al., 2010; Bunch et al., 2015). Likewise, this research found the biggest perceived barrier within CASNR at Oklahoma State University was affordability. Many programs conducted through Oklahoma State cost between \$1000 and \$5000. Knowing affordability of a program is the biggest barrier perceived by students, developing international opportunities that are more affordable is key in increasing the rate of participation in various programs.

Implications

Ultimately, study abroad program developers need to be cognizant of both the barriers and the motivating factors students consider when deciding whether or not to participate in international opportunities. If the motivators are strong enough to outweigh the perceived barriers, it is likely there will be an increase in rate of participation in study abroad. The study conducted at Oklahoma State University was similar to previous research and indicated students within many different universities perceive similar motivating factors and barriers. This allows study abroad program developers to take the data and develop programs that are tailored to students' desires.

Another aspect that was focused on in this research was the different activities included in a study abroad. The most important activities included items such as acquiring hands-on experience and skills, learning about a different culture, traveling in country, sightseeing, and taking courses related to your major. Many of these activities can be done without a study abroad program. Therefore, if an international experience can be developed to include these main aspects, it is likely students will be more willing to participate, even if it comes at a financially higher cost than other trips.

Recommendations for Future Research

In the future, this survey should be distributed to a larger population including students from every college within Oklahoma State University. The college that has a higher percentage of students participating in study abroad within the University is the Spears School of Business (Study Abroad, 2016). If this instrument is distributed among students within the Spears School of Business, researchers may be able to determine why

there is a higher percentage of participants compared to the other colleges at Oklahoma State University.

Further addressing willingness to pay is another recommendation for future research. Adding clarifying questions between students' willingness to pay and scholarship need could allow researchers to understand precisely what students could afford to pay to participate in a study abroad. Asking students how much they would be willing to pay without scholarship and how much they would be willing to pay with scholarship is useful in assisting program developers. This data would allow program developers to know how much their trips should cost.

Focusing on students who have participated in a study abroad previously why they decided to participate is recommended for future study. The responses from students in regards to why those chose to participate would allow those who are involved in developing study abroad programs to develop appealing experiences for other students. It is also recommended to add indicators to the research instrument to determine if students are aware of scholarship opportunities offered through their university.

Certain colleges within universities have a central office which organizes international experiences for students. For instance, at Oklahoma State University, the Spears School of Business has an office in which staff organize and promote international opportunities for students. Determining whether or not colleges or programs within a university have a central office to organize study abroad trips could be beneficial.

Distributing this research instrument among universities in geographically dispersed regions of the United States would allow for comparisons. A similar study was

conducted by Bunch et al. (2015) looking at results from students at Oklahoma State University and the University of Florida. Students in coastal regions may respond differently than students in landlocked regions. Responses on motivators and barriers may vary based on location. For instance, students in a landlocked region may have less motivation to participate than students living in a coastal region. Students who are living in coastal regions are closer to international opportunities than landlocked students who may perceive more barriers to participation in study abroad.

If this survey is replicated at other universities, it is important the survey be delivered in person. The high response rate of this research was due to the in-person distribution of the research instrument. Because of the lengthiness of this instrument, online distribution could cause a lower response rate, therefore, in class distribution is preferred to achieve a high response rate.

It is recommended the results of this study be delivered to universities similar to Oklahoma State University and shared with international study abroad program developers in order to develop study abroad programs in students have a desire to participate.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL FORM

Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board

Date: Wednesday, August 24, 2016

IRB Application No AG1624

Proposal Title: Perceptions of Oklahoma State University College of Agriculture Students Regarding Study Abroad Participation

Reviewed and
Processed as: Exempt

Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved Protocol Expires: 8/23/2019

Principal
Investigator(s):

Sara Young

Jeff Sallee

205 4H Youth Development

Stillwater, OK 74078

Stillwater, OK 74078

The IRB application referenced above has been approved. It is the judgment of the reviewers that the rights and welfare of individuals who may be asked to participate in this study will be respected, and that the research will be conducted in a manner consistent with the IRB requirements as outlined in section 45 CFR 46.

- The final versions of any printed recruitment, consent and assent documents bearing the IRB approval stamp are attached to this letter. These are the versions that must be used during the study.

As Principal Investigator, it is your responsibility to do the following:

1. Conduct this study exactly as it has been approved. Any modifications to the research protocol must be submitted with the appropriate signatures for IRB approval. Protocol modifications requiring approval may include changes to the title, PI advisor, funding status or sponsor, subject population composition or size, recruitment, inclusion/exclusion criteria, research site, research procedures and consent/assent process or forms.
2. Submit a request for continuation if the study extends beyond the approval period. This continuation must receive IRB review and approval before the research can continue.
3. Report any adverse events to the IRB Chair promptly. Adverse events are those which are unanticipated and impact the subjects during the course of the research; and
4. Notify the IRB office in writing when your research project is complete.

Please note that approved protocols are subject to monitoring by the IRB and that the IRB office has the authority to inspect research records associated with this protocol at any time. If you have questions about the IRB procedures or need any assistance from the Board, please contact Dawnell Watkins 219 Scott Hall (phone: 405-744-5700, dawnell.watkins@okstate.edu).

Sincerely,



Hugh Crethar, Chair
Institutional Review Board

APPENDIX B
INFORMED CONSENT

Participant Information Sheet

Project Title:

Perceptions of Oklahoma State University CASNR Students Regarding Study Abroad Participation

Investigator:

Sara Lehman, Graduate Research Assistant, Oklahoma State University

Dear Participant,

The following information describes a research study in which you are being invited to participate. If you do not wish to participate in this study or decide to withdraw from the study at any time while participating, you are free to do so without repercussion or consequences. If you have any questions about this research, please contact the Internal Review Board or the local investigator of this study. Thank you for your time and interest, it is greatly appreciated.

The Study: The overall objective of this research is to determine student preferences in study abroad experiences.

Risks and Benefits: There are no known risks associated with participation in this research study. There are no direct benefits or tangible rewards to you by taking part in the study. The results of this study will provide information to tailor study abroad opportunities to provide student expectations in a study abroad experience at CASNR, OSU.

Voluntary Participation: Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. You are welcome to opt out, skip any question you don't feel comfortable answering or able to stop at any time.

Confidentiality: The records of this research will be kept confidential. Research records will be stored securely on a password protected computer in a locked office and only researchers and individuals responsible for research oversight will have access to the records. There will be no recorded connection between names and completed surveys in order to ensure anonymity.

Contacts: If you have any questions you can reach me, Sara Lehman, at (405) 744-4141 or sara.young@okstate.edu or 205 4-H Youth Development, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, OK 74078. If you have questions about your rights as a research volunteer, you may contact Dr. Hugh Crethar, IRB Chair, 223 Scott Hall, Stillwater, OK 74078, (405)-744-3377 or jrb@okstate.edu.



APPENDIX C
SCRIPT

Script of Information – Sara Young

The purpose of this research is to ultimately identify both what motivates students to participate in an international experience and what hinders them from participating. This survey is developed to determine what students are looking for in a study abroad as well as what they are willing to pay. By participating in this survey, you will have a part in developing better tailored international experiences here at Oklahoma State University. Your participation is completely voluntary. There will be no identifiers tied to your name and your answers will be kept completely anonymous.



APPENDIX D
RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

Perceptions of Oklahoma State University College of Agriculture Students Regarding Study Abroad Participation

This questionnaire is designed to determine Oklahoma State University College of Agriculture Students' willingness to participate in study abroad, international experiences before and while in college, and perceptions of motivators and barriers regarding participation in study abroad.

This is not a test. There are no correct answers. Your answers will be kept confidential.

By completing and returning this questionnaire, you are agreeing to participate in this study.
We appreciate your cooperation!



Please answer the following questions regarding your potential interest in participating in a study abroad experience.

For each item, please circle the response that best represents your opinion.

1. Are you personally interested in participating in a study abroad program in a foreign country while attending OSU?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
2. How important is studying abroad?
 - a. Not important
 - b. Not very important
 - c. Somewhat important
 - d. Very important
3. What sources have you used to inquire about studying abroad (circle ALL that apply)?
 - a. OSU Study Abroad website
 - b. Study abroad fair
 - c. Academic advisor
 - d. Flyer, magazine, newspaper
 - e. Friends/word of mouth
 - f. None
4. What do you think is the most suitable academic level for participation in study abroad?
 - a. Freshman
 - b. Sophomore
 - c. Junior
 - d. Senior
 - e. Graduate school
5. If you participated in study abroad as part of your undergraduate education, which time of the year would be most desirable?
 - a. Fall Semester
 - b. Spring Semester
 - c. Summer
 - d. Intercession Periods

6. How much time would you prefer to spend on a study abroad?
- None
 - 1-3 weeks
 - 4-6 weeks
 - 11-15 weeks
 - Full Semester (16 weeks)
 - 6 months to 1 year
7. Study abroad programs currently cost \$1,000 to over \$5,000 depending on the country visited and length of stay. How much would you be willing to pay to study abroad?
- \$0 - \$999
 - \$1,000 - \$1,999
 - \$2,000 - \$2,999
 - \$3,000 - \$3,999
 - \$4,000 - \$4,999
 - \$5,000 or more
8. Scholarships are often available for students studying abroad; what level of scholarship would you require to participate in study abroad?
- 0% - lack of money is not a deterrent in my situation
 - 1-25% of total cost
 - 26-50% of total cost
 - 51-75% of total cost
 - 76-99% of total cost
 - 100% - a full scholarship is my only option for participation.
9. Rate the appeal of the following general locations for a study abroad experience.

	Not Appealing	Not Very Appealing	Somewhat Appealing	Very Appealing
Africa				
Asia				
Australia or New Zealand				
Central America				
Europe				
India				
North America				
South America				
South Pacific				

10. Please rate each of the following activities in terms of their importance to you when on a study abroad program.

	Not Important	Not Very Important	Somewhat Important	Very Important
In-field lectures and labs				
Acquiring hands-on experience and skills				
Attending non-credit courses at foreign universities				
Taking courses related to your major				
Staying with a host family				
Learning about a different culture				
Participating in field research				
Free time to do what you want				
Speaking and learning host country language				
Traveling in country				
Sightseeing				
Working one-on-one with professors and students				
Socializing with citizens of host country				

11. Which of the following international experiences have you participated in before college, or while attending college? Please indicate by placing an "X" for all that apply.

	Before College	While in College
International Study Tour		
Hosting an international visitor in your house		
Meeting with international exchange students		
Participating in a short-term study abroad program (1-6 weeks)		
Participating in a semester long study abroad program		
Church mission trip to another country		
International guest speaker in a class		
Taking a class focused on international issues		
Going to an international restaurant		
Attending an international festival		
Travel individually or with family/friends to another country		

12. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements by placing an "X" in the box that best describes your opinion.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I am intimidated by the thought of engaging in a study abroad opportunity				
I cannot afford to participate in study abroad opportunities				
Studying abroad will not help me academically				
I am too busy with school				
I am too busy with work				
I am not aware of study abroad opportunities				
Academic departments do not encourage me to participate in study abroad opportunities				
I do not see the need to study abroad				
The culture of the university does not support me in study abroad opportunities				
A study abroad opportunity will not have an impact on my future career.				
I am not interested in learning about other cultures				
I am satisfied with the world I live in and do not see a need to travel				
I am not self-motivated to participate in study abroad opportunities				
My parents do not approve of study abroad opportunities				
I am concerned that a study abroad opportunity will impact my personal relationships.				

13. Please indicate how important the following factors are in determining whether or not you would study abroad by placing an "X" in the box that best describes your opinion.

	Not Important	Not Very Important	Somewhat Important	Very Important
Increased employability				
Opportunity to work in another country after completing current degree				
Learn another language				
Opportunity to live in another country or culture				
Important stage in my personal development				
Overall life experience				
Learn more about my academic specialization				
Get a graduate degree				
Looks good on a resume				
Importance placed by academic advisor/department				

Finally, some personal and professional characteristics

14. What is your current academic major or track?

- a. Agribusiness
- b. Agricultural Communications
- c. Agricultural Economics
- d. Agricultural Education
- e. Agricultural Leadership
- f. Animal Science
- g. Biochemistry and Molecular Biology
- h. Biosystems Engineering
- i. Entomology
- j. Environmental Science
- k. Food Science
- l. Horticulture
- m. Landscape Architecture
- n. Landscape Management
- o. Natural Resource Ecology & Management
- p. Plant and Soil Science
- q. Pre-Professional Programs (Pre-Law, Pre-Med, Pre-Vet)

15. Academic status
- a. Freshman
 - b. Sophomore
 - c. Junior
 - d. Senior
 - e. Graduate
 - f. Non-degree
16. Gender
- a. Male
 - b. Female
17. Ethnicity
- a. Asian
 - b. American Indian or Native American
 - c. African American
 - d. Hispanic
 - e. White (Non-Hispanic)
 - f. Multiracial
18. Are you an international student on an F1 Visa?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
19. What is your current cumulative GPA?
- a. 3.75-4.00
 - b. 3.50-3.74
 - c. 3.25-3.49
 - d. 3.00-3.25
 - e. 2.75-2.99
 - f. 2.50-2.74
 - g. 2.25-2.49
 - h. 2.00-2.24
 - i. 1.99 and below
 - j. This is my 1st semester
20. Which of the following categories represents where you lived growing up?
- a. Outside city limits
 - b. In city limits
- If in city limits, what is the approximate population of your city?
- _____
21. Are you fluent in a language other than English?
- a. No
 - b. Yes
- If yes, what language? _____

- 22. Do you currently receive federal financial aid to help with college expenses?
 - a. No
 - b. Yes
- 23. Are you part of Oklahoma Promise (OHLAP)?
 - a. No
 - b. Yes
- 24. Do you currently receive any other scholarships?
 - a. No
 - b. Yes
- 25. Have you participated in a study abroad or international internship program previously?
 - a. No
 - b. Yes

That's all, thanks for your input!

VITA

Sara Lynn Lehman

Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Science

Thesis: INCREASING THE RATE OF PARTICIPATION IN INTERNATIONAL
EXPERIENCES WITHIN THE COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURAL SCIENCES
AND NATURAL RESOURCES AT OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY

Major Field: International Agriculture

Biographical:

Education:

Completed the requirements for the Master of Science in International
Agriculture at Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma in May, 2017.

Completed the requirements for the Bachelor of Science in Animal Science at
Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma in 2015.

Professional Memberships:

Member of Agricultural Honor Fraternity: Alpha Zeta.