

Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad

© Katy Lane, Theresa Pesl Murphrey, Gary Briers, Larry Dooley, James Lindner, Christi H. Esquivel

The work is licensed under the [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/).

Volume 36, Issue 1, pp. 624-639

DOI: 10.36366/frontiers.v36i1.795

www.frontiersjournal.org



Comparing Influence and Value Based on Study Abroad Program Types

Katy Lane¹, Theresa Pesl Murphrey¹, Gary Briers¹, Larry Dooley¹, James Lindner², Christi H. Esquivel³

Abstract

Providing students opportunities to travel outside their home country to engage new cultures and perspectives increases global awareness and desirable workplace skills. Students are most influenced to go abroad by cost, course(s), length, and destination, and by family, peers, and advisors. This study examined data from 1,807 students at a U.S. university who participated in faculty-led, exchange, or provider programs over three years. We described students' personal characteristics, influences on going abroad, value derived, and perceptions of safety. Statistically significant relationships between program type and participant characteristics were found. Principal influencers on students' pursuit of global experiences included the study abroad website, faculty members, and former student participants. Their perceived value of study abroad was high. Participants believed their experience was a good investment and would recommend it to others. These results may assist education abroad professionals in their engagement with various student populations to encourage and enable global experiences.

1 TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY, COLLEGE STATION, TX, UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

2 AUBURN UNIVERSITY, AUBURN, AL, UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

3 MCLENNAN COMMUNITY COLLEGE, WACO, TX, UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Corresponding author: Katy Lane, klane@tamu.edu

Accepted date: March 20th, 2024

Abstract in Spanish

Brindar a los estudiantes oportunidades para viajar fuera de su país de origen para involucrarse en nuevas culturas y perspectivas aumenta la conciencia global y las habilidades laborales deseables. Los estudiantes se ven más influenciados para viajar al extranjero por el costo, los cursos, la duración y el destino, así como por la familia, los compañeros y los asesores. Este estudio examinó datos de 1.807 estudiantes de una universidad de los Estados Unidos que participaron en programas dirigidos por profesores, de intercambio o de proveedores durante tres años. Describimos las características personales de los estudiantes, sus influencias al viajar al extranjero, los valores derivados y las percepciones de seguridad. Se encontraron relaciones estadísticamente significativas entre el tipo de programa y las características de los participantes. Los principales influyentes en la búsqueda de experiencias globales por parte de los estudiantes incluyeron el sitio web de estudios en el extranjero, miembros del cuerpo docente y ex estudiantes participantes. El valor percibido de estudiar en el extranjero era alto. Los participantes creyeron que su experiencia fue una buena inversión y la recomendarían a otros. Estos resultados pueden ayudar a los profesionales de la educación en el extranjero en su compromiso con diversas poblaciones estudiantiles para fomentar y permitir experiencias globales.

Keywords:

Exchange, faculty-led, global awareness, influence, value

Introduction

Preparing students to be successful in an interconnected world requires global perspective and intercultural understanding (Wright, 2010; Zhai & Scheer, 2004). Research shows that this essential international knowledge comes most directly from engagement with foreign cultures in another country (Bruening, 2001; Douglas & Jones-Rikkers, 2001). Bruening and Frick (2004) and Lumkes et al. (2012) demonstrate that participating in an international experience increases a student's global knowledge and skills.

Additionally, more employers recognize that prospective employees gain much-needed cross-cultural communication and language skills through participation in global experiences (Bruening & Frick, 2004; Orahod et al., 2008). Thus, it is essential for universities to include international learning experiences in their curricula to equip graduates with the highly necessary and desired skills to work successfully with

individuals from a variety of cultures (Anderson et al., 2006; Wright, 2010). Fortunately, study abroad programs are continuing to gain interest from college students as their preferred means of international/global education (Amani & Minsun Kim, 2018).

Researchers have studied what influences a student's decision to study abroad and what effects their selection of a particular program. Reasons include academic motivation (e.g., the alignment of courses offered with degree requirements), the timing and length of the program (e.g., a winter break program does not interfere with a summer internship or familial commitments and fits between semesters), and the program's destination (Nyaupane et al., 2011). Individuals who influence study abroad program selection include family (Bunch et al., 2013), peers (Zhai & Scheer, 2002), and academic advisors (Bender et al., 2009). Additional influencers are the student's background and home institution (Bunch et al., 2013). Finally, the most cited factor in a student's decision to study abroad is program cost and available funding (Nyaupane et al., 2011; Zhai & Scheer, 2002). Amani and Minsun Kim (2018) reported the importance of understanding what influences a student's participation as the desirable outcomes from an international experience may not be reached if students do not go abroad (2018). This study assessed student characteristics, influence, value, and perceptions of their global experience by program type. Differentiating between program types allows international education offices to tailor their resources for program promotion and management to specific program types that align with their university objectives and student needs.

Methods

The purpose of this study was to assess international experiences of students based on program type. The research objectives were to (a) describe the students' personal characteristics by study abroad program type, (b) determine influences on students concerning their choice to go abroad, (c) identify differences between program types on the value students place on their experience abroad, and (d) determine if there are differences among program types on students' perceptions of preparation and safety. The objectives were accomplished by assessing quantitative survey results received from students after their international experiences.

A study abroad office at a large U.S. land grant university collects survey responses from students after their international experience. We received permission to access and analyze the de-identified data collected from students who participated in all international program types from fall 2016 through fall 2019. Data were reviewed and cleaned, omitting incomplete submissions. A total of 5,110 individual survey responses were received; however, 1,757 (34.4%) were incomplete, resulting in 3,353 responses to analyze.

Over the course of the three-year period, the survey instrument was changed by the study abroad office multiple times. Therefore, it was critical to review each data set from all survey versions to identify similar questions across the 3,353 responses. In total, $N = 1,807$ (53.9%) of the completed survey responses included corresponding questions for analysis. Students who participated in three distinct program types labeled exchange, third-party provider, and faculty-led programs across the three years provided data for the study. Exchange programs involve a student switching places with a student from a partner university to spend one or two semesters of study at their university. Third-party provider programs assemble a group of students from various universities to participate together in a program, either at a study center abroad or through direct enrollment at a foreign institution. Faculty-led programs are a group of students from the same university traveling abroad together to take course(s) taught by faculty from their home university (The Forum on Education Abroad, 2023). The data were analyzed to describe the participants, to determine relationships between specific pairs of variables, or to examine deviations in responses by type of international program pursued.

We acknowledge that there is a myriad of factors that impact individual decisions to engage in international experiences. For our study, program type, length, and/or cost represent confounding variables as these aspects are correlated to the experience and causally related to our dependent variables (i.e., value students place on their study abroad experience and students' perceptions of preparation and program safety of their study abroad experience).

Findings

As shown in Table (1) on the next page, respondents consisted of students from a large U.S. land grant university who participated in one of three international program types: exchange programs ($n = 220$), provider programs ($n = 254$), and programs led by faculty ($n = 1,333$). Students participating in exchange programs consisted of $n = 117$ (53%) females, $n = 92$ (42%) males, and $n = 11$ (5%) not reporting gender. Students participating in provider programs consisted of $n = 183$ (72%) females, $n = 44$ (17%) males, and $n = 27$ (11%) not reporting gender. Students participating in faculty programs consisted of $n = 759$ (57%) females, $n = 444$ (33%) males, and $n = 130$ (10%) not reporting gender. Of the total almost twice as many females ($n = 1059$, 65%) as males ($n = 563$, 35%) participated in study abroad (gender was the only identity dimension included in all surveys across the three-year period). All students on exchange programs participated in semester-long experiences. A majority of other students participated in a summer experience, including $n = 148$ (58%) on provider and $n = 729$ (55%) on faculty-led programs. Faculty-led programs had the greatest

participation of the program types during winter with $n = 323$ (24%) students. A majority of the students, $n = 1,076$ (59.5%), began planning their international experience in their sophomore or junior year. For exchange programs, $n = 64$ (29% of the 220) participants began planning their experience before college or during their freshman year while faculty programs had $n = 161$ (12% of 1,333) participants who planned during their senior year to go abroad. The number of times students had traveled outside of the U.S. before their study abroad experience here varied from no abroad experience to extensive abroad experience, with a plurality reporting travel abroad four or more times prior to the study abroad program. This included $n = 100$ (45%) exchange participants, $n = 107$ (42%) provider participants, and $n = 453$ (34%) faculty-led program participants. The faculty-led programs had the most participation (in both numbers and percentage) from students who had never been abroad with $n = 221$ (17%) students. An overwhelming majority, $n = 1,378$ (76.3%), participated in the international experience during their junior or senior year. The least number of students, $n = 17$ (1%), went abroad during their freshman year. Participants reported majors in 13 (of the 15) colleges across the university. Exchange programs were mostly represented by business majors ($n = 70$, 32%) and engineering majors ($n = 55$, 25%), provider programs were mostly represented by liberal arts majors ($n = 152$, 60%), and faculty-led programs were mostly represented by engineering majors ($n = 321$, 24%).

Variable	Exchange ($n = 220$)		Provider ($n = 254$)		Faculty-led ($n = 1333$)		Total ($N = 1807$)	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
Gender								
Female	117	53	183	72	759	57	1059	59
Male	92	42	44	17	444	33	580	32
No response	11	5	27	11	130	10	168	9
Program term								
Semester	220	100	105	41	281	21	606	35
Summer	0	0	148	58	729	55	877	48
Winter	0	0	1	0	323	24	324	17
When did you start planning your international experience?								
Prior to college	23	10	10	4	48	4	81	4
Freshman	41	19	40	16	157	12	238	13
Sophomore	80	36	70	28	389	29	539	30
Junior	51	23	88	35	398	30	537	30
Senior	6	3	16	6	161	12	183	10
Graduate	10	5	3	1	55	4	68	4
No response	9	4	27	11	125	9	161	9
How many times had you traveled outside the U.S., not including this program?								
None	26	12	24	9	221	17	271	15
1 - 3	85	39	96	38	534	40	715	39
Four or more times	100	45	107	42	453	34	660	37

No response	9	4	27	11	125	9	161	9
Classification while abroad								
Freshman	4	2	1	0	12	1	17	1
Sophomore	14	6	19	7	139	10	172	9
Junior	117	53	97	38	463	35	677	37
Senior	67	30	106	42	528	40	701	39
MS/MBA	9	4	3	1	39	3	51	3
Doctoral student	0	0	1	0	27	2	28	2
No response	9	4	27	11	125	9	161	9
College of study								
Agriculture and Life Sciences	8	4	5	2	189	14	202	11
Architecture	12	5	13	5	185	14	210	12
Business	70	32	23	9	175	13	268	15
Education	3	1	11	4	41	3	55	3
Engineering	55	25	6	2	321	24	382	21
Geosciences	1	0	2	1	10	1	13	1
Law School	0	0	0	0	5	0	5	0
Liberal Arts	46	21	152	60	0	0	198	11
Marine Sciences	9	4	1	0	155	12	165	9
Public Health	1	0	5	2	18	1	24	1
Public Service	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0
Science	3	1	5	2	21	2	29	2
Veterinary Medicine	0	0	3	1	69	5	72	4
No response	12	5	28	11	143	11	183	10

TABLE (1): COMPARISON OF STUDENTS' PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS BY INTERNATIONAL PROGRAM TYPE

Cramer's v (a non-parametric measure of association) revealed a statistically significant relationship between program type and the number of times a participant traveled out of the country ($v = .076$, $p = .015$). The weak correlation shows that students with less travel outside of the country are slightly more likely to choose faculty-led programs. Even though the correlation is statistically significant, the effect size (.076) is negligible (Cohen, 1988).

Cramer's v also revealed a statistically significant relationship between program type and when the participant started planning for their study abroad program ($v = .136$, $p < .001$). The correlation shows that when a student starts planning their education abroad experience at a later classification, the program type is more likely to be a faculty-led program. This moderate statistically significant correlation had a small the effect size (.136) (Cohen, 1988). This aligns with Fitzsimmons et al.'s (2013) findings that students perceive greater social pressure for short-term programs which accumulate as friends and acquaintances participate in and share their global experiences.

Cramer's v also showed a statistically significant relationship between when a participant starts planning their study abroad and gender ($v = .079$, $p = .009$). The weak

to moderate correlation shows that female students are more likely to start planning earlier than male students. Even though the correlation is statistically significant, the effect size (.079) is negligible (Cohen, 1988).

Additionally, Cramer's v revealed a statistically significant relationship between gender and program type ($v = .112, p < .001$). This weak to moderate correlation indicates female students are slightly more likely to choose a provider or faculty-led program and male students to choose an exchange program. Even though they are statistically significant, the effect size (.112) is negligible (Cohen, 1988). As mentioned previously, the majority of students on exchange programs were from the colleges of business and engineering which were 52.3% male and 78.2% male, respectively, during the time these surveys were conducted.

A Spearman's correlation was run to determine the relationship between the number of times a participant traveled out of the country and when the participant started planning for their study abroad. There is a weak and insignificant relationship ($r = .034, p = .166$) and no threat of multicollinearity. Both independent variables (number of times traveled outside the country and when planning started) could be left in the regression model. Multicollinearity statistics were performed, with a tolerance of .998 and a VIF of 1.002. This means there is no correlation between the variables such that one variable does not predict the other.

Table (2) on the following page reveals the reasons cited by students for their international program choice. Students could select as many choices as were applicable from a list of 13 reasons provided in the survey. The options were chosen by the office that conducted the survey based on prior free-response answers. The most identified items noted as influencing them were the university's study abroad office website (15%), faculty members (14%), and former student participants (13%). A student doing his/her own research (0%) was least cited, followed by informational tables (2%), social media (3%), a college study abroad advisor (4%), the study abroad fair (5%), and other (5%). Of the students who participated in an exchange program, 508 reasons were identified by 220 respondents for an average 2.31 reasons per student. The greatest number selected this program type due to the study abroad office's website (111, 22%) or meeting with a study abroad advisor (110, 22%). For students who participated in a provider program, 476 reasons were identified by 254 respondents for an average 1.87 reasons per student. There were 89 (19%) participants who visited the study abroad website to select their program and 64 (13%) participants cited either discussing the program with their academic advisor or meeting with a study abroad advisor as a reason for selecting this program type. No set of responses stood out more than others. However, the most frequent combination of three responses selected by six (6) provider

participants and five (5) exchange participants was: 1) meeting with a study abroad advisor, 2) academic advisor, and 3) the Study Abroad Programs website. The most frequent duo of responses was: 1) meeting with a study abroad advisor, and 2) the Study Abroad Programs website. This combo was selected by seven (7) provider participants and 12 exchange participants. For faculty-led programs, 2,703 reasons were selected by 1,333 respondents for an average 2.03 reasons per student. There were 474 (18%) participants who identified a faculty member as the reason for selecting their program. Additionally, 370 (14%) cited a class presentation or informational session, and 13% said either the study abroad website ($n = 355$) or a former student participant ($n = 352$) influenced their decision to select a faculty program. The most frequent combination of three responses selected by 16 faculty-led participants were: 1) faculty member, 2) former student participant, and 3) class presentation or attending an informational. Additionally, 27 faculty-led participants selected the combination of faculty member and class presentation or informational.

Variable	Exchange ($n = 508$)		Provider ($n = 476$)		Faculty-led ($n = 2703$)		Total ($N = 3687$)	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
Academic advisor	47	9	64	13	254	9	365	10
Class presentation/informational	23	5	13	3	370	14	406	11
College-specific study abroad advisor	33	7	11	2	87	3	131	4
Faculty member	27	5	16	3	474	18	517	14
Former student participant	53	10	57	12	352	13	462	13
Information table at an event	6	1	17	4	62	2	85	2
Meeting with a study abroad advisor	110	22	64	13	169	6	343	10
My own research	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	0
Program flyer or poster	29	6	31	7	246	9	306	8
Social media	15	3	27	6	81	3	123	3
Study abroad fair	26	5	48	10	121	5	195	5
Study abroad website	111	22	89	19	355	13	555	15
Other	26	5	39	8	132	5	197	5

TABLE (2): COMPARISON OF WHAT INFLUENCED STUDENTS WITH PROGRAM SELECTION BY INTERNATIONAL PROGRAM TYPE

Students were asked three questions: 1) Would they recommend this experience to others? 2) Did they feel the experience was a good investment, and 3) Would they do the experience again if financial and academic opportunities permitted? (see Table 3 on the following page) All response scales were 5-point Likert-type scales of “strongly agree” (5) to “strongly disagree” (1). The survey responses show that almost all respondents ($M = 4.73$, $SD = 0.7$) strongly agreed or agreed to recommend their international experience to others. This includes 198 (90%) students on exchange programs, 214 (84%) students on provider programs, and 1,167 (87%) students on faculty programs. Provider programs had 12 (5%) students indicate that they disagree or strongly disagree about recommending their programs, which was the largest number of the three program types. Similar responses were obtained regarding

students believing the experience abroad was a good investment ($M = 4.70$, $SD = 0.7$). There were 204 (93%) students on exchange programs, 214 (84%) students on provider programs, and 1,157 (87%) students on faculty programs who said they strongly agreed or agreed the program was a good investment. Only two (1%) exchange participants and 36 (2%) faculty-led participants said they disagreed or strongly disagreed about their program being a good investment; however, provider participants had 12 (5%) students indicate the program was not a good investment. Responses were almost identical across all program types when asked if they would do the experience again if there were no academic or financial barriers to doing so ($M = 4.71$, $SD = 0.7$). There were 87% (191) exchange, 85% (1,139) faculty-led, and 82% (208) provider students indicating they strongly agreed or agreed they would do the experience again. However, there were 15 (6%) exchange participants who disagreed or strongly disagreed they would do the experience again. Two students cited difficulty with course approval and two others with courses being more challenging than expected. Another student did the study abroad because it was a degree requirement. Two additional students cited positive experiences including one who said, “This was an absolutely amazing experience, and I wouldn’t try to replicate it again.”

Variable	Exchange (<i>n</i> = 220)		Provider (<i>n</i> = 254)		Faculty (<i>n</i> = 1333)		Total (<i>N</i> = 1807)	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
Recommend experience to others								
Strongly Agree	150	68	166	65	990	74	1306	72
Agree	48	22	48	19	177	13	273	15
Neutral	2	1	1	0	1	0	4	0
Disagree	8	4	7	3	16	1	31	2
Strongly Disagree	1	0	5	2	10	1	16	1
No response	11	5	27	11	139	10	177	10
Felt experience was good investment								
Strongly Agree	160	73	166	65	944	71	1270	70
Agree	44	20	48	19	213	16	305	17
Neutral	1	0	0	0	1	0	2	0
Disagree	3	1	9	4	19	1	31	2
Strongly Disagree	1	0	3	1	17	1	21	1
No response	11	5	28	11	139	10	178	10
Would do again if financial and academic opportunities permit?								
Strongly Agree	154	70	177	70	988	74	1319	73
Agree	37	17	38	15	151	11	226	13
Neutral	2	1	0	0	2	0	4	0
Disagree	14	6	9	4	41	3	64	3
Strongly Disagree	1	0	2	1	10	1	13	1
No response	12	5	28	11	141	11	181	10

TABLE (3): COMPARISON OF VALUE STUDENTS PLACE ON EXPERIENCE BY INTERNATIONAL PROGRAM TYPE

Combining all three of these variables creates the students' perceived value of their international experience. Additionally, internal consistency improves if the third question about doing the experience again is removed (Cronbach's alpha = .872). Overall, 1,528 (93.6%) students ranked their overall perceived value as high, 66 (4.0%) as moderate, and 39 (2.4%) as low. There was a non-significant correlation between perceived value and program type ($v = -0.02$, $p = .41$). Cramer's v correlation was computed to assess the relationship between perceived value and program type. There was a very weak correlation between the two variables, $v = .06$, $p = .009$.

Students were also asked: 1) Did you feel adequately prepared for your study abroad experience, and 2) Did you feel safe while abroad? (see Table 4 below). The variables were measured with a 5-point or a 4-point Likert-type scale, respectively, from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Almost all respondents strongly agreed or agreed that they felt adequately prepared for their experience. There were 203 (92%) students on exchange programs, 232 (91%) students on provider programs, and 1,181 (89%) students on faculty programs. Faculty programs had 128 (9%) students and provider programs had 20 (8%) indicate that they disagreed or strongly disagreed about feeling prepared for their experience. All students reported feeling safe while abroad. This included 1,323 (99%) students on faculty programs, 250 (98%) of students on provider programs, and 212 (97%) students on exchange programs.

Variable	Exchange (<i>n</i> = 220)		Provider (<i>n</i> = 254)		Faculty-led (<i>n</i> = 1333)		Total (<i>N</i> = 1807)	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
I felt adequately prepared for experience.								
Strongly Agree	95	43	102	40	556	42	753	42
Agree	108	49	130	51	625	47	863	48
Neutral	6	3	2	1	13	1	21	1
Disagree	11	5	18	7	112	8	141	7
Strongly Disagree	0	0	2	1	16	1	18	1
No response	0	0	0	0	11	1	11	1
I felt safe while abroad.								
Strongly Agree	160	73	161	63	894	67	1215	67
Agree	52	24	89	35	429	32	570	32
Disagree	5	2	2	1	9	1	16	1
Strongly Disagree	0	0	2	1	1	0	3	0
No response	3	1	0	0	0	0	3	0

TABLE (4): COMPARISON OF STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF PREPARATION AND SAFETY BY INTERNATIONAL PROGRAM TYPE

All 1,807 students were surveyed about their preparation ($M = 4.33$, $SD = 0.79$) and feeling of safety ($M = 4.65$, $SD = 0.55$). Calculation of Pearson's r revealed a moderate positive correlation, $r = .263$. Students who felt adequately prepared for the experience abroad reported feeling safer while abroad. No statistically significant relationship was found between program type and feeling adequately prepared for the experience

abroad ($v = .04$, $p = .22$) or between program type and feeling safe abroad ($v = -.01$, $p = .84$).

Conclusions

In summary, this study assessed the international experiences of 1,807 students from 13 different colleges at a U.S. land grant university based on program type. First, we identified variations in the students' personal characteristics by program type abroad. Provider program participants were much more likely to be female (72%) and exchange program participants were much more likely to plan their experience abroad prior to college or during their freshman year (29%). The number of times students traveled outside the U.S. varied from none to multiple times, with faculty-led program participants having the most students who had never been abroad (17%). Perhaps this suggests that students who had not traveled outside the U.S. previously preferred a short(er) duration study abroad experience led by faculty from their university. On the other hand, if students had already traveled outside the U.S., they might have felt much more prepared for the long(er) duration, semester-long exchange programs.

Survey results indicated that students were most influenced to go abroad by the study abroad website, faculty members, and students who previously pursued a global experience. The influence of faculty and students aligns with prior research. Peterson (2003) found that faculty members are influential sources for informing students about opportunities and encouraging them to study abroad. This correlates with our findings that the largest percentage of students on faculty programs (18%) pursued the experience due to influence from a faculty member. This was not the case for exchange and provider program types where faculty influence was 5% and 3% respectively. Additionally, influence from a peer is so impactful that students in Fitzsimmons et al.'s (2013) study said they would be less likely to pursue an international experience if none of their friends had done so. Amani and Minsun Kim (2018) agreed that having a friend who had traveled abroad can be a positive influence on a student's decision to pursue an international experience (2018). This was consistent in our findings across all program types in our study with 10-13% of students saying they were influenced to pursue their program type by a former student participant. Additionally, Murphrey et al. (2016) found students would prefer to have someone they know with them on an international experience. While Salisbury et al. (2009) found that the availability of information about study abroad opportunities informs a student's decision, the potential impact of a study abroad website to influence potential study abroad participants needs to be studied further.

The literature provides several indicators used by students to determine if an international experience was a good investment. This includes a change in values and

language acquisition (Knight & Schmidt-Rinehart, 2002), an ability to reflect on being an outsider (Harrison & Brower, 2011), and increased interest in travel, arts, and history (Wielkiewicz & Turkowski, 2010). While we found that 84% of students across all program types said they strongly agreed or agreed that the program was a good investment, we do not know why they rated the program as a good investment. Additionally, past literature has not provided data regarding students recommending an international experience to others or participating on additional trips if there were no academic and financial barriers. Results of our study are informative in showing less than 5% of student participants from each program type would not recommend their international experience to others. This includes 4.1% of exchange program participants ($n = 9$), 4.7% of provider program participants ($n = 12$), and 2.0% of faculty-led program participants ($n = 26$).

A review of literature also provides examples of the preparation needed before taking part in an international experience. Some of the suggestions include ensuring compliance with university and government requirements (e.g., ensuring course credit is pre-approved or obtaining a passport), completing medical requirements (e.g., obtaining required vaccinations), making financial preparation (e.g., applying for scholarships), and packing (McGowan, 2007). Many researchers have conducted studies on barriers to studying abroad. The most often seen response usually involves finances. Other barriers are a lack of family support, work and family commitments, concern for safety, and not aligning with academic needs or career goals (Jones et al., 2016, Vernon et al., 2017). The data examined as part of our study revealed that special strategies are needed to encourage participation in non-faculty-led program types which tend to be longer in duration. This is especially true for students in the colleges of agriculture, architecture, business, and engineering as students in these programs pursue faculty-led programs by an overwhelming majority. This could be an awareness issue which relates to the prior point of exposing students to global experiences earlier in their college career, or the increased barriers like course equivalency that limit participation in exchange and provider programs (Fitzsimmons et al., 2013).

Implications

Our findings point to specific implications related to planning international experiences for college students. Based on students beginning to plan their international experience during sophomore and junior years, it is not a surprise that most students go abroad as a junior or senior. This shows a clear need for early program promotion. According to research, students must be introduced early to study abroad, preferably during the first semester of their freshman year (Orahood et al., 2008). Additionally, planning is essential and at least a year is recommended from the

consideration of the option to study abroad until embarking on the experience (Salisbury et al., 2009; Williamson, 2019). Adequate advanced planning would provide students the possibility to pursue any of the program types. This is especially important for exchange and provider programs that require advance course mapping to determine degree plan equivalencies and since these programs cannot be pursued in a student's last semester due to credit transfer. Faculty-led programs offer courses from the home university so additional course approvals are not needed.

There are also specific implications related to preparation activities. Participants for provider ($n = 20$, 8%) and faculty-led ($n = 128$, 9%) programs disagree more with feeling prepared for their international experience than exchange participants. This speaks to a greater need to ensure students on these two former program types feel adequately prepared. One reason for this result could be due to unanticipated free time on faculty-led and provider programs that require students to navigate the local language, transportation, and other differences on their own (Linder & McGaha, 2013). On the other hand, program outreach materials and pre-departure preparation for students on exchange programs frequently emphasize the independence required for these program types.

Given that engagement with study abroad advisors was lowest for the faculty-led group while more students in this program type disagreed with feeling adequately prepared, there is an implication that increasing the engagement with these advisors could have a positive impact on students. While the role of the faculty in preparing students for these types of study abroad programs is important, findings reveal that more engagement with study abroad advisors could benefit students' pre-departure preparation. At the same time, given that a large majority of agree and strongly agree respondents felt adequately prepared for their experience and feeling safe while abroad is a testament to the quality of the programs being offered by the university—including the choice of exchange partners, outside providers, and faculty leaders—and the program destinations.

Finally, the study exposes an opportunity to offer experiences for students to go abroad during their freshman or sophomore year. Based on a study by Amani and Minsun Kim (2018), a faculty's inclusion of global awareness and issues in their classroom promoted a desire in students to learn more by going abroad. Given this, there is the implication that the incorporation of global issues into new student conferences and/or registration visits taking place prior to the beginning of freshman year and during freshman year courses could facilitate students participating in global experiences earlier in their college careers, thus expanding their program type options.

Recommendations for Future Research

Understanding why students choose to engage in international experiences and what motivates them to participate in specific program types can enable study abroad program leaders to develop programming that can best serve students. Our study assessed quantitative survey results. Additional research utilizing qualitative methods to collect student perceptions would be valuable. This would enable the understanding of nuance differences across exchange programs, provider programs, and faculty-led programs.

References

- Amani, M., & Minsun Kim, M. (2018). Study abroad participation at community colleges: Students' decision and influential factors. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*, 42(10), 678-692. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10668926.2017.1352544>
- Anderson, P. H., Lawton, L., Rexeisen, R. J., & Hubbard, A. C. (2006). Short-term study abroad and intercultural sensitivity: A pilot study. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 30(4), 457-469. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2005.10.004>
- Bender, C., Wright, D., & Lopatto, D. (2009). Students' self-reported changes in intercultural knowledge and competence associated with three undergraduate science experiments. *Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad*, 18, 301-321. <https://doi.org/10.36366/frontiers.v18i1.268>
- Bruening, T. H. (2001, April 4-7). *Benefits of participating in a collaborative international common education program* [Paper presentation]. Proceedings of the 17th Annual Meeting of the Association for International Agricultural and Extension Education in Baton Rouge, LA. <https://doi.org/10.5191/jiaee.2004.11110>
- Bruening, T. H., & Frick, M. (2004). Globalizing the U.S. undergraduate experience: A case study of the benefits of an international agriculture field-based course. *Journal of International Agricultural and Extension Education*, 11(1), 89-96. <https://doi.org/10.5191/jiaee.2004.11110>
- Bunch, J. C., Lamm, A. J., Israel, G. D., & Edwards, M. C. (2013). Assessing the motivators and barriers influencing undergraduate students' choices to participate in international experiences. *Journal of Agricultural Education*, 54(2), 217-231. <https://doi.org/10.5032/jae.2013.02217>
- Cohen, J. (1988). *Statistical Power Analysis for the Behavioral Sciences* (2nd ed.). Lawrence Erlbaum Associates. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203771587>
- Douglas, C., & Jones-Ridders, C. G. (2001). Study abroad programs and American students' worldmindedness. *Journal of Teaching in International Business*, 13(1), 55-66. https://doi.org/10.1300/J066v13n01_04
- Fitzsimmons, S. R., Flanagan, D. J., & Wang, X. (2013). Business students' choice of short-term or long-term study abroad opportunities. *Journal of Teaching in International Business*, 24, 125-137. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08975930.2013.819710>
- Harrison, J. K., & Brower, H. H. (2011). The impact of cultural intelligence and psychological hardiness on homesickness among study abroad students. *Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad*, 21, 41-62. <https://doi.org/10.36366/frontiers.v21i1.303>
- Jones, B.T., Power, A., Gray, T., Downey, G., Hall, T., & Truong, S. (2016). If you build it, they may not come: Why Australian university students do not take part in outbound mobility experiences. *Journal of University Teaching and Learning Practice*, 13(3), 9.
- Knight, S. M., & Schmidt-Rinehart, B. C. (2002). Enhancing the homestay: Study abroad from the host family's perspective. *Foreign Language Annals*, 35(2), 190-201. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1944-9720.2002.tb03154.x>

- Linder, S., & McGaha, J. (2013). Building on successes: Reflections from two approaches to study abroad for undergraduate and graduate students. *The Educational Forum*, 77(3), 379-389. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00131725.2013.792900>
- Lumkes, J. H., Hallett, S., & Vallade, L. (2012). Hearing versus experiencing: The impact of short-term study abroad experience in China on students perceptions regarding globalization and cultural awareness. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 26, 151-159. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2011.12.004>
- Murphrey, T. P., Lane, K., Harlin, J., & Cherry, A. (2016). An examination of pre-service agricultural science teachers' interest and participation in international experiences: Motivations and barriers. *Journal of Agricultural Education*, 57(1), 12-29. <https://doi.org/10.5032/jae.2016.01012>
- Nyaupane, G. P., Paris, C. M., & Teye, V. (2011) Study abroad motivations, destination selection, and pre-trip attitude formation. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 13, 205-207. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jtr.811>
- Orahood, T., Woolf, J., & Kruze, L. (2008). Study abroad and career paths of business students. *Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad*, 17, 133-141. <https://doi.org/10.36366/frontiers.v17i1.248>
- Peterson, D. L. (2003). *The decision to study abroad: Contributing factors and implications for communication strategies*. [Doctoral dissertation, Michigan State University]. MSU Libraries Digital Repository. <https://doi.org/10.25335/M5RJ48V0F>
- Salisbury, M. H., Umbach, P. D., Paulsen, M. B., & Pascarella, E. T. (2009). Going global: Understanding the choice process of the intent to study abroad. *Res High Educ*, 50, 119-143. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11162-008-9111-x>
- The Forum on Education Abroad. (2023, August 10). *Glossary*. <https://www.forumea.org/glossary.html>
- Vernon, A., Moos, C., & Loncarich, H. (2017). Student expectancy and barriers to study abroad. *Academy of Educational Leadership Journal*, 21(1), 1-9.
- Wielkiewicz, R. M., & Turkowski, L. W. (2010). Reentry issues upon returning from study abroad programs. *Journal of College Student Development*, 51(6), 649-664. <https://doi.org/10.1353/csd.2010.0015>
- Williamson, W. (2019). *Study abroad map: The complete study guide to college beyond the USA*. Agapy Publishing.
- Wright, D. J. (2010). Planning a study abroad clinical experience. *Journal of Nursing Education*, 49(5), 280-286. <https://doi.org/10.3928/01484834-20100115-05>
- Zhai, L., & Scheer, S. D. (2002). The influence of international study abroad programs on agricultural college students. *Journal of International Agricultural and Extension Education*, 9(3), 23-29. <https://doi.org/10.5191/jiaee.2002.09303>
- Zhai, L., & Scheer, S. D. (2004). Global perspectives and attitudes towards cultural diversity among summer agriculture students at The Ohio State University. *Journal of Agricultural Education*, 45(2), 39-51. <https://doi.org/10.5032/jae.2004.02039>

Author Biography

Katy Lane is a Clinical Assistant Professor in the Department of Management at Texas A&M University and Director of the Center for International Business Studies at Mays Business School. Her research focuses on global high-impact experiences and cross-cultural learning. She has more than 15 years of experience in international education, including the creation of new programs and initiatives, providing oversight for outreach and risk management, and leading programs in the Americas, Asia, and Europe.

Theresa Pesl Murphrey is a Professor in the Department of Agricultural Leadership, Education, and Communications at Texas A&M University. Her research focuses on teaching and learning, evaluation, and change to address educational and learning issues, develop best practices, and maximize learning. She has published more than 50 peer-reviewed publications. With more than 20 years of experience in eLearning and curriculum development, she has participated in projects totalling over \$4 million.

Gary Briers is a Professor in the Department of Agricultural Leadership, Education, and Communications at Texas A&M University. His work centers on rural and agricultural development and he has been a faculty member at Texas A&M University for nearly 40 years. One of his current projects centers on developing global competence through direct, purposeful experiences in developing countries; in turn, those experiencing a new context are providing agricultural skills to lesser-educated people.

Larry Dooley is an Associate Professor Emeritus in the Department of Educational Administration & Human Resource Development at Texas A&M University. His research focuses on servant leadership in international organizations, training and development and international agricultural development. Post retirement he continues to collaborate as an external evaluator for NSF and USDA grant proposals. His consulting company, *The TECH Training Group* has numerous clients providing services in customized training, evaluation, coaching & leadership and human development.

James Lindner is an Alumni Professor of Agriscience Education at Auburn University. He has established a national reputation as a rigorous scholar and prolific author focusing on planning and needs assessment, and research, measurement, and analysis in the context of distance education. He has authored or co-authored over 200 research papers. He has been principal investigator, co-principal investigator, or collaborator for over 50 projects totaling over \$5.0 million.

Christina H. Esquivel is Division Chair of Business Programs at McLennan Community College. She has also served as a faculty member in the area of applied economics for more than twenty years. Her research focuses on teaching and learning especially as it relates to undergraduates. Christi has served on various higher education committees related to teaching and learning, participated in grant projects, and served as a supporting author on various peer reviewed publications.