

# Agriculture Students' Interests, Preferences, Barriers and Perceived Benefits of International Educational Experiences<sup>1</sup>

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## Abstract

Internationalizing universities' agricultural science curricula may be more easily accomplished if students participate in international educational experiences. The purpose of this study was to examine Texas A&M University and Tarleton State University's college of agriculture students' interests, preferences, motivational factors and concerns about gaining international educational experiences. Most students (n = 87) had never participated in an international educational experience. Students indicated that faculty-led study abroad programs (one to ten weeks in duration) were the most preferred type of international educational experience. Enriching their life experience, living in another country and improving a résumé were the top motivational factors for participation. Factors identified as prohibiting participation were financial concerns, housing and language barriers. Colleges of agriculture should promote motivational factors and limit barriers to participation in international educational experiences. A significant difference existed between students' perceptions that study abroad improved competitiveness in the global marketplace and their willingness to participate in study abroad programs. Colleges of agriculture should seek ways to increase student diversity, reduce financial barriers and incorporate student preferences for short-

term, faculty-led international educational experiences. Faculty and administrators could incorporate service-learning components and seek funding partnerships with private industry, non-governmental organizations and in-country government organizations to lower program costs.

## Introduction

International components of curricula have grown in popularity and importance in colleges of agriculture (Graham, 2012). National identities are subsiding because of global awareness, improved technologies and increased attention through international media (Coers et al., 2012). Globalization affects current and future agriculture students in their personal and professional lives. Internationalizing curricula leads to increased global competencies, enhanced worldviews and internalization of different cultural concepts (Dooley et al., 2008). Most 1862 land grant universities provide courses with international agricultural content and focus (Gouldthorpe et al., 2012). However, research shows that agricultural students have limited international experiences and backgrounds and efforts to internationalize education are not meeting expectations (Irani et al., 2006; Wingenbach et al., 2003, 2006). Between 2000 and 2010, 1.5%

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of agriculture students participated in study abroad programs, while students in the social sciences averaged 23% (Institute of International Education, 2012). Why do college of agriculture students participate in study abroad programs less than students in other colleges?

Factors that affect student participation in study abroad programs are comprised of internal and external barriers. Irani et al. (2006) and Wingenbach et al. (2006) concluded that internal barriers to participation in study abroad programs included lack of cultural knowledge, language skills, family support and cultural bias. Students could overcome these barriers. External barriers include lack of time, financial constraints, conflict with classes and lack of opportunities (Irani et al., 2006). Students cannot easily overcome these barriers. Briers et al. (2010) concluded that the most important internal and external factors affecting student participation in international programs were language incompatibility and financial concerns, respectively.

Students recognize the benefit of international experiences even though barriers to participation exist. Zhai and Scheer (2004) found that agricultural college students who had international education experiences believed studying abroad was a useful experience in promoting personal development and global competencies. In addition, study abroad programs improve students' global perspectives and increase their ability to discern cultural differences (Wright and Clarke, 2010). Briers et al. (2010) found a positive relationship between students' willingness to study abroad and their perceptions of increased competitiveness in employment by participating in a study abroad program. Study abroad programs should promote students' awareness of international education experiences and minimize barriers to participation so students receive the largest benefit possible from the experience (Coers et al., 2012).

## Methods

The purpose of this study was to determine students' interests, motivations, concerns and perceptions of international educational experiences. Specific objectives were to ascertain students' interests in gaining international educational experiences; to describe factors that may facilitate or prohibit them from gaining such experiences; and to determine if significant relationships existed between students' perceptions of international educational experiences and selected factors. Approval to conduct this research was obtained from the Texas A&M University Institutional Review Board.

A correlational design was used to measure college of agriculture students' perceptions of international education involvement at two universities in Texas. The cross-sectional survey collected data from college

of agriculture students at Texas A&M University and Tarleton State University. Both groups were surveyed at about the same time (Fraenkel and Wallen, 2009).

The population of interest ( $N = 431$ ) included selected college students enrolled in introductory animal science classes at Texas A&M University ( $N = 305$ ) and Tarleton State University ( $N = 126$ ). The population included students from several majors and classifications. The sample size ( $n = 153$ ) was calculated on the basis of an 80/20 split with a 5% sampling error at a 95% confidence level (Dillman et al., 2009). All classifications of students were in the target audience. Stratified random sampling was used to increase the likelihood of representativeness of the sample to the target population (Fraenkel and Wallen, 2009). Sample subgroups were students in the colleges of agriculture at Texas A&M University ( $n = 116$ ) and Tarleton State University ( $n = 37$ ). Errant e-mail addresses ( $n = 4$ ) and students' rights to opt out of the study ( $n = 2$ ) reduced the sample; 98 students (71 from Texas A&M University and 27 from Tarleton State University) provided useable responses, for a 67% response rate. The small sample size is recognized as a limitation of the study.

Non-parametric tests were used to control for non-response error (Independent Samples Mann-Whitney U Test) to compare early to late respondents on one question (students' preferences for acquiring international education experiences). The findings may be generalized to the target population ( $N = 431$ ) because no differences existed between early and late respondents (Lindner et al., 2001).

The research instrument was a fourth adaptation of an online questionnaire used to determine attributes of European Union students; changes were made to be more representative for students in U.S. colleges of agriculture (Plompen and Murrell, 2006; Briers et al., 2010). The instrument included items to measure students' interests and preferences for international educational experiences, factors that influenced (motivated or prohibited) students' desires to gain international educational experiences and perceptions of international educational experiences.

Respondents' ranked six items from 1 (most preferred) to 6 (least preferred) for their interests and preferences for international educational experiences (Briers et al., 2010; Plompen and Murrell, 2006; Shinn et al., 2008), according to the effect each would have on their decisions about studying abroad. Overall rank was determined by weighting rank scores in reverse order; first place rank scores received six points each, while sixth place rank scores received one point each.

Factors influencing students' desires to gain international educational experiences were measured using 10 items derived from the literature (Briers et al., 2010;

Plompen and Murrell, 2006; Shinn et al., 2008). Respondents ranked each of the 10 factors using a scale ranging from 1 (does not motivate) to 4 (motivates a lot). Factors prohibiting (also known as barriers) students' desires to gain international educational experiences were measured with 14 items derived from the literature (Briers et al., 2010; Plompen and Murrell, 2006; Shinn et al., 2008). Respondents ranked the 14 prohibitive factors on a scale that ranged from 1 (not difficult) to 4 (very difficult). Students may be concerned about gaining international educational experiences through study abroad programs; 14 selected concerns that may influence students' decisions about study abroad were measured on a scale ranging from 1 (not important) to 4 (very important).

Finally, the relationship between respondents' "willingness to study abroad" and their perceived "competitiveness in the global marketplace," were measured with two questions. Students were asked if they believed their current degree would improve their competitiveness in the global marketplace and if participation in a study program would improve their competitiveness in the global marketplace. Response options were yes, neutral/unsure and no.

Data were collected with an online questionnaire. A personalized pre-notice e-mail was sent to students two days before the survey (Dillman et al., 2009). Follow-up reminders were sent to non-respondents every three days after the initial distribution for three weeks (Ladner et al., 2002). Descriptive statistics and bivariate analyses were used to analyze and report the findings of this study.

**Results and Discussion**

Participants (N = 98) consisted of 69% females (Table 1). The majority (72%) was Caucasian/White; 19% were Hispanic and 3% were an ethnicity other than Caucasian/White or Hispanic. Undergraduate students comprised 87% of respondents and 6% were graduate students (7% did not indicate their degree level). More than one-half (55%) reported only English speaking abilities; about one-third (30%) indicated they spoke

English and Spanish and 8% spoke English and other languages. Most respondents (89%) had no international educational experiences, such as participation in a study abroad program. These findings are congruent with the results of Moriba (2011) and Moore et al. (2011) who found that most students had not participated in international educational experiences.

Students were asked if they considered participating in a study abroad program (Table 2). More than three-fourths (76.5%) of those who answered yes were then asked to rank-order six study abroad program types derived from previous studies (Briers et al., 2010; Plompen and Murrell, 2006; Shinn et al., 2008). Those who did not (23.5%) want to consider participating in a study abroad skipped the rank-order question.

Respondents ranked registering for a university faculty-led study abroad spending one to ten weeks as the most preferred ( $\Sigma = 307$ ) study abroad program type for gaining international educational experiences (Table 2). Other top ranked preferences included registering for university study abroad courses for an internship,

*Table 1. Student Participants' Demographic Profiles (N = 98)*

| Variables  | Categories                                  | f <sup>a</sup> | %    |
|--|---|----------------|------|
| School   | Texas A&M University                        | 78             | 79.6 |
|  | Tarleton State University                   | 20             | 20.4 |
| Gender   | Female                                      | 68             | 69.4 |
|  | Male  | 23             | 23.5 |
| Ethnicity  | Caucasian/White                             | 71             | 72.4 |
|  | Hispanic                                    | 19             | 19.4 |
|  | Others                                      | 3              | 3.0  |
| Degree Level                                       | Undergraduate                               | 85             | 86.7 |
|  | Graduate                                    | 6              | 6.1  |
| Estimated Cumulative Grade Point Average           | 3.00-3.49                                   | 34             | 34.7 |
|  | 3.50-4.00                                   | 24             | 24.5 |
|  | 2.50-2.99                                   | 19             | 19.4 |
|  | 2.00-2.49                                   | 8              | 8.2  |
|  | Less than 2.00                              | 5              | 5.1  |
| Languages  | English only                                | 54             | 55.1 |
|  | English and Spanish                         | 30             | 30.6 |
|  | English and other languages                 | 8              | 8.1  |
| Have you participated in any study abroad program? | No  | 87             | 88.8 |
|  | Yes, it was a satisfying experience         | 3              | 3.1  |
|  | Yes, but it was not a satisfying experience | 1              | 1.0  |

<sup>a</sup>Frequencies may not total 98 because of missing data.

*Table 2. Students' Interests and Preferences in International Education Experiences (N = 98)*

| Would you consider studying abroad?   |                      |                 |                 |                 |                 |                 | f   | %                 |
|---|----------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----|-------------------|
| Yes, I would consider a study abroad  |                      |                 |                 |                 |                 |                 | 75  | 76.5              |
| No, I do not want to study abroad   |                      |                 |                 |                 |                 |                 | 23  | 23.5              |
| Preferences of those who would consider studying abroad   | Frequencies (n = 75) |                 |                 |                 |                 |                 |     |                   |
|   | 1 <sup>st</sup>      | 2 <sup>nd</sup> | 3 <sup>rd</sup> | 4 <sup>th</sup> | 5 <sup>th</sup> | 6 <sup>th</sup> | Sum | Rank <sup>z</sup> |
| Register for a university faculty-led study abroad spending 1-10 weeks abroad   | 28                   | 14              | 9               | 4               | 7               | 7               | 307 | 1                 |
| Register for university study abroad course as an internship, directed study, research project, or similar international experience | 12                   | 14              | 24              | 8               | 8               | 7               | 285 | 2                 |
| Register for university courses at a university study center (e. g., Costa Rica, etc.)  | 10                   | 12              | 17              | 15              | 9               | 7               | 258 | 3                 |
| Register for course at a foreign university, with transfer credits back to your university  | 9                    | 11              | 11              | 11              | 20              | 7               | 233 | 4                 |
| Register for course from a study program from another U.S. university, with transfer credits back to your university                | 8                    | 14              | 5               | 14              | 14              | 11              | 219 | 5                 |
| Register for a program at a foreign university and complete the degree from that university   | 2                    | 4               | 9               | 5               | 8               | 37              | 136 | 6                 |

<sup>z</sup> Overall rank was determined by weighting rank scores in reverse order; 1<sup>st</sup> place rank scores received six points each, while 6<sup>th</sup> place rank scores received one point each. Individual weighted scores for each preference were summed to derive the overall rank.

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directed study, research project, or similar international experience ( $\Sigma = 285$ ) and registering for university courses at a university study center ( $\Sigma = 258$ ). These data showed that students were willing to gain international educational experiences with guidance from faculty members more so than relying on foreign universities and/or foreign programs of study.

The results are consistent with the literature (Briers et al., 2010; Institute of International Education, 2011) that students preferred faculty-led, short-term study abroad programs or similar experiences. These findings indicate students' reluctance, perhaps because of familial background and/or being inexperienced with travel abroad, to participate in international experiences on their own initiative. There may be a certain "safety in numbers" mentality among agriculture students considering study abroad participation. College of agriculture faculty should consider strongly students' backgrounds, previous international experiences and willingness to travel alone, when developing new international agricultural experience programs.

Dynamics of study abroad are changing for academic institutions nationwide. For example, the Institute of International Education report (2011) concluded that about 56% of the 270,000 students who studied abroad in the 2009-2010 school year, selected short-term international educational experiences, compared with 36% of those who participated in semester-long international experiences. Students enrolled in faculty-led study abroad experiences are rising in popularity; however, the exact number of faculty-led programs in academic institutions nationwide is unknown (Mullens and Cuper, 2012).

Research shows that faculty-led study abroad programs attract more diverse populations of students compared to traditional groups (Caucasian, female, junior-year students) that study abroad for a semester in Europe (Mullens and Cuper, 2012). These diverse populations could include minorities, students with disabilities, or lower-income students who may not have the financial support for a semester-long study abroad program.

Students preferred to register for study abroad programs held by their universities. It is important for agriculture study abroad programs to be designed for students who want to join such programs. Examples of preferred study abroad programs include uni-

versity faculty-led short-term programs, study abroad courses as internships and university courses at international study centers. Designing these types of programs may require additional faculty and administrator resources; however, such experiences have resulted in rich and rewarding outcomes for students and academic professionals (Mullens and Cuper, 2012).

Students rated ten factors that would motivate them to acquire international educational experiences through study abroad (Table 3). Respondents reported that international educational experiences enriched their overall life experiences ( $M = 3.47$ ,  $SD = .75$ ), provided the opportunity to live in another country or culture ( $M = 3.31$ ,  $SD = .90$ ) and that it looked good on a résumé ( $M = 3.17$ ,  $SD = .82$ ), as the top three motivating factors for acquiring international educational experiences (Table 3). The results are similar to Briers et al. (2010), who found that motivational factors for study abroad included enriching one's overall life experience, an opportunity to live in a foreign country, increased employability and it looked good on a résumé.

These results show that university faculty and study abroad program leaders could increase students' motivation to participate in international educational experiences by highlighting personal and professional benefits. Students will make an effort to participate in a study abroad if they perceive certain rewards for their efforts. Relyea et al. (2008) posited that expectancy theory leads to perceived rewards, if students expending those efforts value the rewards from study abroad. Establishing study abroad program value requires careful consideration of prospective students' perceived study abroad benefits. Students' motivation to participate in study abroad varies by the perceived values of such programs (Relyea et al., 2008). Therefore, faculty and study abroad program leaders should emphasize potential values to increase students' motivation to participate in study abroad. Similarly, universities could encourage such experiences to help students prepare for global citizenship.

**Table 3. Students' Ratings of Selected Factors That May Motivate Them to Study Abroad (n = 48)**

| Factors  | Does not motivate | Motivates a little | Motivates | Motivates a lot | <i>M</i> <sup>2</sup> | SD   |
|--|-------------------|--------------------|-----------|-----------------|-----------------------|------|
|  | <i>f</i>          | <i>f</i>           | <i>f</i>  | <i>f</i>        |                       |      |
| Enrich overall life experience   | 1                 | 4                  | 14        | 28              | 3.47                  | .75  |
| Opportunity to live in another country or culture                      | 3                 | 5                  | 14        | 26              | 3.31                  | .90  |
| Looks good on a résumé   | 1                 | 9                  | 18        | 19              | 3.17                  | .82  |
| Increased employability  | 2                 | 7                  | 21        | 18              | 3.15                  | .83  |
| Important stage in my personal development                             | 5                 | 6                  | 26        | 11              | 2.90                  | .88  |
| Learn more about my academic specialization                            | 4                 | 15                 | 15        | 14              | 2.81                  | .96  |
| Learn another language   | 6                 | 18                 | 14        | 10              | 2.58                  | .96  |
| Get a graduate degree  | 8                 | 19                 | 11        | 10              | 2.48                  | 1.01 |
| Importance placed by academic advisor/department                       | 12                | 15                 | 11        | 10              | 2.40                  | 1.09 |
| Opportunity to work in another country after completing current degree | 10                | 19                 | 12        | 6               | 2.30                  | .95  |

Note. Frequencies may not total 48 because of missing data.

<sup>2</sup> Four-point Likert-type scale: 1 (Does not motivate) to 4 (Motivates a lot).

Respondents evaluated the level of difficulty (1 = Not difficult...4 = Very difficult) for 14 factors that would prohibit them from gaining international educational experiences (Table 4). Financial concerns were rated as most difficult. They believed that paying for the program or funding their living expenses and studies during the study abroad (M = 3.24, SD = .83) and finding affordable and adequate housing (M = 3.11, SD = .94) were the top two difficult or challenging factors (barriers) (Table 4). Others (Briers et al., 2010; Irani et al., 2006; Texas A&M University, 2010) found similar results, in that students did not study abroad because they perceived it as an expensive process. If “internationalization of the agricultural sciences” is a shared goal, then all stakeholders must seek solutions to minimize barriers, especially financial barriers, which prohibit students’ participation in study abroad or other international agricultural programs. Irani et al. (2006) found that limiting barriers to participation increased students’ intent to participate in international educational experiences.

Students rated the importance of 14 factors that would cause them concern while making choices about study abroad programs or foreign universities. The rating scale ranged from “not important” to “very important.” The 14 concerns about gaining international educational experiences were drawn from previous research (Briers et al., 2010; Plompen and Murrell, 2006; Shinn et al., 2008) (Table 5). Affordability (M = 3.70, SD = .62) was the only concern rated as very important (M = 3.51-4.00), when considering gaining international

experiences. Respondents rated 11 of the 14 concerns as “important” (M = 2.51-3.50), with the country itself and available information about the country, university and program, resulting in the same mean (M = 3.45) (Table 5). Two concerns (having friends who study at that university and having friends and family in the area or region) were rated as somewhat important (M = 1.51-2.50).

These results validate the findings of Briers et al. (2010), who found the most important student concerns when deciding on study abroad were affordability, the country itself and information available about the country, university and program. Financial support could be realized through college and/or university scholarships

**Table 4. Students’ Rating of Factors That May Prohibit Them from Studying Abroad (n = 45)**

| Factors  | Not difficult | A little difficult | Difficult | Very difficult | M <sup>z</sup> | SD   |
|--|---------------|--------------------|-----------|----------------|----------------|------|
|  | f             | f                  | f         | f              |                |      |
| Paying for the program or funding my living expenses and studies during the study abroad | 1             | 8                  | 15        | 21             | 3.24           | .83  |
| Finding affordable and adequate housing  | 3             | 8                  | 15        | 19             | 3.11           | .94  |
| Language barriers  | 1             | 12                 | 24        | 8              | 2.87           | .73  |
| Other financial constraints  | 4             | 14                 | 14        | 13             | 2.80           | .97  |
| Time required making preparations  | 4             | 17                 | 20        | 3              | 2.50           | .76  |
| Gaining admission or being accepted where I want to study                                | 1             | 24                 | 16        | 3              | 2.48           | .66  |
| It is stressful to prepare, organize, and implement                                      | 6             | 18                 | 15        | 6              | 2.47           | .89  |
| Graduate on time   | 9             | 15                 | 15        | 6              | 2.40           | .96  |
| Paperwork required for studying in another country                                       | 6             | 18                 | 18        | 3              | 2.40           | .81  |
| Transferring course credits  | 7             | 19                 | 14        | 5              | 2.38           | .89  |
| Being allowed to study abroad by my major  | 10            | 17                 | 12        | 6              | 2.31           | .97  |
| It would be difficult for me to leave the U.S. and my family for a long time             | 15            | 18                 | 7         | 5              | 2.04           | .98  |
| My family situation makes it difficult for me to consider the opportunity                | 20            | 11                 | 10        | 4              | 1.96           | 1.02 |
| I may lose opportunities in the U.S. if I leave for a long time                          | 23            | 12                 | 8         | 1              | 1.70           | .85  |

Note. Frequencies may not total 45 because of missing data.  
<sup>z</sup> Four-point Likert-type scale: 1 (Not difficult) to 4 (Very difficult).

**Table 5. Students’ Ratings of Selected Concerns about Gaining International Educational Experiences (n = 47)**

| Concerns  | Not important | Somewhat important | Important | Very important | M <sup>z</sup> | SD   |
|---|---------------|--------------------|-----------|----------------|----------------|------|
|   | f             | f                  | f         | f              |                |      |
| Affordability   | 4             | 6                  | 37        | 47             | 3.70           | .62  |
| The country itself  | 1             | 1                  | 21        | 24             | 3.45           | .65  |
| Information available about the country, university, and program                                    | 1             | 4                  | 15        | 27             | 3.45           | .75  |
| The subject matter specialty of the program   | 2             | 9                  | 14        | 22             | 3.19           | .90  |
| Accessibility to and from the U.S.  | 5             | 6                  | 12        | 24             | 3.17           | 1.03 |
| Cultural attractions in the area  | 1             | 8                  | 24        | 14             | 3.09           | .75  |
| The language spoken in the country and/or the university  | 2             | 8                  | 23        | 14             | 3.04           | .80  |
| For U.S study abroad programs, the reputation of the university organizing the study abroad program | 1             | 11                 | 23        | 12             | 2.98           | .77  |
| For university programs, the reputation of the specific program                                     | 2             | 12                 | 20        | 13             | 2.94           | .85  |
| For study in foreign universities, the reputation of the foreign university                         | 5             | 12                 | 19        | 11             | 2.77           | .94  |
| Weather conditions/climate  | 2             | 19                 | 17        | 9              | 2.70           | .83  |
| Having friends accompany me on the study abroad (for U.S. study abroad programs)                    | 9             | 14                 | 11        | 12             | 2.57           | 1.09 |
| Having friends who study at that university (for study in foreign universities)                     | 12            | 17                 | 11        | 7              | 2.28           | 1.01 |
| Having friends and family in the area or region   | 17            | 18                 | 6         | 6              | 2.02           | 1.02 |

Note. Frequencies may not total 47 because of missing data.  
<sup>z</sup> Four-point Likert-type scale: 1 (Not important) to 4 (Very important).

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**Table 6. Relationship between Perceptions of International Educational Experiences and Willingness to Study Abroad (n = 93).**

| Perceptions of International Educational Experiences   | Willingness to Study Abroad |    | Cramer's V |
|--|-----------------------------|----|------------|
|  | Yes                         | No |            |
| Do you believe your current degree will improve your competitiveness in the global marketplace?                          | Yes 17                      | 38 | .19        |
|  | Unsure 6                    | 29 |            |
|  | No -                        | 3  |            |
| Do you believe that participating in study abroad programs would improve your competitiveness in the global marketplace? | Yes 51                      | 10 | .27*       |
|  | Unsure 17                   | 12 |            |
|  | No 2                        | 1  |            |

\*  $p < .05$ .

or through private fundraising campaigns. It is important for college of agriculture faculty members to collaborate with university study abroad program personnel to reduce students' concerns about participating in international education experiences.

A relationship between respondents' "willingness to study abroad" and their perceived "competitiveness in the global marketplace," was significantly, positively correlated (Cramer's  $V = .27$ ,  $p < .05$ ) (Table 6). Students who were willing to gain international educational experiences in study abroad programs believed such participation would improve their competitiveness in the global marketplace, as opposed to students who did not or were not willing to participate or who thought such participation would not improve their competitiveness. These results supported others (Briers et al., 2010; Stroud, 2010) who found that students, who were motivated to study abroad, also believed such experience made them more competitive in a diverse and global job market.

Students who study abroad may have an advantage over those who do not when seeking employment. Students should be encouraged to market their study abroad experiences, based on the program's learning outcomes and personal and professional gains, to employers. Students could highlight their knowledge of intercultural sensitivities or increased global awareness to potential employers as positive contributions to the workplace. Future studies should examine agricultural employers' perceived values from study abroad experiences. Focused, in-depth studies on the benefits gained from international agricultural experiences, conducted in collaboration with the agricultural industry, could produce greater buy-in and financial support from industry representatives.

### Summary

Internationalization of curriculum in higher education is important, especially in colleges of agriculture. A globally-minded college may be more likely to produce students as global citizens by increasing their tolerance and understanding of other cultures. One method of helping students achieve these goals is through study abroad programs. More than three-fourths of the respon-

dents in this study held positive attitudes toward study abroad. Texas A&M University and Tarleton State University colleges of agriculture could capitalize on these students' attitudes by increasing their own efforts to further internationalize the agricultural sciences through agricultural study abroad programs.

Agriculture students are willing to consider participating in international educational experiences; however, certain barriers prohibit their participation. Enrollment in agriculture study abroad programs remains low because of perceived and real barriers, such as financial concerns. Universities and faculty members should emphasize the benefits of participation in study abroad programs and seek solutions to reduce these barriers.

Universities and faculty should emphasize the benefits of participation in a study abroad program. Irani et al. (2006) stated that the greater degree to which agricultural students recognized the importance of international education, the more likely they would participate in such activities in college. However, it is important to note that intention is different than enrollment and participation in international education programs. Study abroad program leaders should help students leverage their study abroad experiences when applying for jobs, internships, or graduate school admissions.

Future research should examine agricultural employers' perceived values derived from study abroad experiences. Employers can help identify which components (i.e., language skills, intercultural competencies, agriculture skills, abilities, or knowledge gained) of study abroad programs are most beneficial for entry-level employment. Future research is needed to determine if barriers to participation differ across demographics. Minorities participate in international educational experiences at lower rates than do Whites/Caucasians; future research should determine the factors affecting this phenomenon.

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