

Assessing the Motivators and Barriers Influencing Undergraduate Students' Choices to Participate in International Experiences

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International experiences (IEs) are becoming one of the most critical elements of an undergraduate student's education to address the knowledge needed to become globally competent. However, student enrollment in IEs has been limited. Agricultural educators can more easily influence students' decisions regarding participation in IEs if they understand students' perceptions of associated motivators and barriers. Realizing geographic location may have an impact on students' decisions, this study assessed the motivators and barriers influencing students' choices to participate in IEs at two geographically diverse land-grant universities. Students at both schools perceived the overall importance of participating in IEs as moderately important, and exhibited a neutral level of agreement with the International experience (IE) barrier items. Even though the barriers and the motivators were similar, previous participation levels in IEs were significantly different when the universities were compared. Specific barriers, motivators, and personal characteristics were found to be significant predictors of participation in IEs, and the level of significance varied depending on the university attended. The results confirm that many undergraduate students are not fully engaged in IEs, that agricultural educators should strive toward eliminating barriers to participation, and that recruitment incentives should be developed based on the needs of the specific university.

Keywords: attitudes, barriers, international experiences, motivators, study abroad, undergraduate students

International learning experiences are becoming one of the most critical elements of an undergraduate student's education to address the knowledge and skills needed to become globally competent (Ludwig & McGirr, 2003; Moriba, 2011; Zhai & Scheer, 2002). The ability to thrive in an increasingly team-oriented, culturally, ethnically, and racially diverse work environment is not only desired by employers around the world but even required in some cases (Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2007). As employers hire graduates from colleges of agriculture, they are expecting them to have a "good grasp on issues and events that affect things throughout the world" (Irani, Place, & Friedel, 2006, p. 28).

Many students, unfortunately, do not obtain the global knowledge expected by their employers while attending college (Hudzik, 2004). Wingenbach et al. (2003) assessed students' knowledge and attitudes surrounding international agricultural issues and found "only 5% achieved a passing score in a knowledge assessment about agricultural policies, products, peoples, and cultures" (p. 25). Across many higher education disciplines, attempts are being made to broaden the cultural awareness of students as employers worldwide are stressing an emphasis on global issues when making hiring decisions (Bardhan, 2003; Mushi, 2004; Starkey & Osler, 2001). Although colleges of agriculture are looking for ways to integrate international perspectives into their curricula (Navarro & Edwards, 2008), many graduates

have been perceived as having a “lack of knowledge of how globalization affects the United States and [the] international agribusiness environment” (Stephens & Little, 2008, p. 47).

To address this issue, Bruening and Shao (2005) conducted a Delphi study of the Association for International Agricultural and Extension Education (AIAEE) members to identify the methods needed to internationalize the agricultural undergraduate curriculum. The methods that emerged as most appropriate for international instruction included using experiential learning techniques such as creating presentations involving discussions with those who have international experience, internationally focused agricultural field trips, and one to three week international internships/study abroad trips. Previous studies have shown that direct international experiences had the largest impact on students’ understanding of global markets, their recognition of how narrow their previous perceptions of international agriculture were, and their interest in working in a global agricultural market (Bruening & Frick, 2004; Zhai & Scheer, 2002).

Although research has identified the benefits of undergraduate student engagement in international experiences (IEs), student participation is still limited (Institute of International Education, 2010). In fact, the number of agricultural students participating in international experiences is decreasing. In a national report, the Institute of International Education (2010) reported that even though 3,149 undergraduate students with agricultural majors participated in study abroad in 2007/08, only 2,864 participated in 2008/09. Given the need to increase undergraduate student participation in international experiences, it is important to understand and consider the factors influencing students’ choices regarding their participation in IEs.

Theoretical Framework

The theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 2002) was used as the theoretical framework for this study. According to Ajzen (2002), human behavior is guided by three beliefs: behavioral,

normative, and control. Ajzen’s (2002) perspective suggests that behavioral, normative, and control beliefs guide an individual’s choices regarding specific variables identified in his theory of planned behavior: a favorable or unfavorable attitude towards a behavior, the subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control (Ajzen, 1991). A person’s behavior can be modified; thus, increasing the chance the person will perform a desired action through the manipulation of any or all of these variables (Ajzen, 2006; Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980; Francis et al., 2004).

Behavioral beliefs represent likely outcomes of a targeted behavior and the individual’s associated evaluations of the outcomes (Ajzen, 2002). A person’s behavioral beliefs contribute to a favorable or unfavorable attitude toward the targeted behavior (Ajzen, 2002). It is expected that if an individual perceives the potential favorable outcomes of a behavior outweigh the potential negative outcomes, the individual will engage in the behavior (Ajzen, 2002). Therefore, if an individual perceives the value of participating in an international experience (IE) outweighs the cost and time associated with doing it, the individual will participate. Costs associated with IEs noted in other studies include the amount of time required to participate in the program, financial costs, time to learn another language, and lost opportunities while away (Andreasen, 2003; Briers, Shinn, & Nguyen, 2010; Irani et al., 2006). Benefits noted by students when discussing international experiences include increased employability, personal development, expanded cultural awareness, the opportunity to learn another language, and more social competence in unfamiliar settings (Briers et al., 2010; Bruening & Frick, 2004; Carlson, Burn, Useem, & Yachimowicz, 1990; Opper, Teichler, & Carlson, 1990; Zhai & Scheer, 2002).

Normative beliefs represent what the individual perceives other important individuals or groups in a given social system expect in regard to a targeted behavior (Ajzen, 2002). Normative beliefs are linked with how an individual develops their perceptions of the subjective norm of the targeted behavior (Ajzen, 2002). Therefore, if participating in IEs is a norm for the group with which the student aligns

himself or herself (Ajzen, 2002), it is expected the student will pursue engaging in an IE. For example, if a student comes from a community that, or has parents and friends who, value(s) IEs, he or she will be more likely to participate (Ajzen, 2006). The opposite condition is also true. If the social influences in a student's life do not view IEs to be an important part of an individual's education, the student will be less likely to participate. Irani et al. (2006) found that students did not perceive spending time away from their families and friends was a potential barrier to their participation in an IE.

Control beliefs represent the potential presence of factors that may aid or impede an individual's performance of a specific behavior (Ajzen, 2002). If an individual perceives that factors exist keeping him or her from being able to exercise a specific behavior, the person will be less likely to engage in the concomitant experience (Ajzen, 2002). For example, undergraduate students have very little control over their academic requirements. Several studies have found students were concerned that studying abroad would add more credit hours to their existing academic program of study, thus delaying their graduation date (Briers et al., 2010; Irani et al., 2006).

Through a review of the theory of planned behavior, it has been established that a student's behavioral, normative, and control beliefs about IEs must be understood to make valid recommendations on how to modify an individual's attitude toward IEs (Francis et al., 2004). The review of literature has identified many factors that contribute to students' choices regarding IEs, which are influenced largely by their familial structure, background, and where they are enrolled as undergraduate students. Gaining a perspective on the motivators and barriers agricultural undergraduate students perceive, and recognizing the variation that exists between students at different universities, will assist agricultural educators in developing IEs in which students may be more likely to participate.

Purpose & Objectives

The purpose of this study was to assess the motivators and barriers influencing under-

graduate students' decisions regarding participation in IEs. The research objectives were to (a) describe students' personal characteristics and previous IEs at two geographically different land-grant universities in the United States, (b) describe the students' perceived motivators and barriers influencing their decisions to participate in IEs, and (c) determine if differences existed between students' perceived motivators and barriers influencing their decision to participate in IEs depending on selected personal characteristics and the university attended.

Methods

The study's population consisted of all University of Florida and Oklahoma State University undergraduate students enrolled in colleges of agriculture during the 2010-2011 academic year. The specific land-grant universities were targeted strategically by the researchers to understand the motivators and barriers associated with IEs, and how those motivators and barriers differed based on characteristics associated with geographic location. The University of Florida is geographically located in the southeastern United States and is physically closer to international destinations than Oklahoma State University. The University of Florida is situated in a state with numerous metropolitan areas and therefore had students who had grown up in more suburban-type locations. Oklahoma State University is geographically located in the midwest United States and in a state that is landlocked. The state has few metropolitan areas and the institution's students had grown up in rural areas primarily. The sample consisted of two, large enrollment, required introductory level courses consisting of a variety of students from across the respective colleges of agriculture. The courses were known to include a full range of students representing the target population ($n = 440$).

A web-based survey instrument, developed by the researchers, consisted of 55 items designed to measure four constructs: students' IEs before college, students' IEs while in college (Irani et al., 2006), students' perceptions of barriers associated with IEs, and students' perceptions of motivators associated with IEs.

Personal characteristics of the participants were also collected. Data were gathered during the Fall semester of the 2010-2011 academic year.

The constructs measuring students' IEs before college and while in college consisted of questions that asked whether participants had engaged in 11 IEs during a specified time in their lives. To measure the barriers associated with IEs, participants were asked to signify their level of agreement with a set of 15 statements using a five-point, summated-rating scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 2 = *disagree*, 3 = *neither agree nor disagree*, 4 = *agree*, and 5 = *strongly agree*). Examples of barrier items included (a) academic departments do not encourage study abroad opportunities, (b) many students cannot afford to participate in study abroad opportunities, (c) a study abroad opportunity will not have an impact on the student's future career, and (d) many parents do not approve of study abroad opportunities.

To measure the motivators associated with IEs, participants were asked to indicate the level of importance they associated with 15 motivation statements using a five-point, summated-rating scale (1 = *not at all important*, 2 = *slightly important*, 3 = *somewhat important*, 4 = *moderately important*, and 5 = *extremely important*). Examples of motivator items included (a) increased employability, (b) overall life experience, (c) important stage in my personal development, and (d) learn another language. Further, eight personal characteristics questions were also asked to describe the sample and make selected correlational analysis achievable. To assure face and content validity, a panel of experts at each university reviewed the instrument. The instrument was revised slightly to reflect the panel members' suggestions.

To initiate data collection, researchers from both universities recruited students through face-to-face meetings during a regular scheduled course time on the same date. The researchers described the purpose of the study and gave students a Uniform Resource Locator (URL) to access the online survey instrument. The students were given two weeks to complete the instrument. The students were incentivized by the courses' instructors of record who agreed to give each student five bonus points for

completing the instrument. A follow-up electronic message reminder was sent to all students at both universities one week after initial contact by the researchers. To control for non-response error, the participants' personal characteristics were compared to those of all course participants at each university. No significant differences were found between the two groups. A total of 342 instruments were collected resulting in a response rate of 78%. Data were coded for analysis using SPSS18. The reliability of the barriers and motivators constructs were calculated *post hoc* resulting in Cronbach's alpha coefficients of .72 and .85, respectively. Descriptive statistics, independent *t*-tests, and multiple regression were used to achieve the study's objectives.

Findings/Results

Objective one sought to describe students' personal characteristics and previous IEs at two geographically different U.S. land-grant universities. Respondents at the University of Florida ($n = 178$) consisted of 112 (62.9%) female and 66 (37.1%) male respondents. Respondents at Oklahoma State University ($n = 164$) included 103 (62.8%) female and 61 (37.2%) male respondents (see Table 1). All of the respondents at the University of Florida were undergraduate students. Most were upper division students with seven (3.9%) freshmen, 48 (27.0%) sophomores, 68 (38.2%) juniors, and 55 (30.9%) seniors. In addition, 26 (14.6%) reported they had transferred from another institution. Most of the respondents at Oklahoma State University were lower division undergraduate students with 76 (46.3%) freshmen, 44 (26.8%) sophomores, 34 (20.7%) juniors, eight (4.9%) seniors, and 1 (0.6%) master's level graduate student. In addition, 40 (24.4%) students reported transferring from another institution (see Table 1).

Regarding respondents' ethnicities, at the University of Florida, 115 (64.6%) were White, 26 (14.6%) were Hispanic, 16 (9.0%) were Asian, 14 (7.9%) were Black, and 6 (3.4%) were Multiracial. At Oklahoma State University, 134 (81.7%) of the respondents were White, 19 (11.6%) were American Indian/Native American, six (3.7%) were Hispanic, two (1.2%)

were Multiracial, and 1 (.6%) was Black (see Table 1).

At the University of Florida, the majority of respondents ($f = 136$, 76.4%) reported having grown up in a subdivision in a town or city, 26 (14.6%) grew up in a rural, non-farm setting, 11 (6.2%) grew up in a downtown area of a city or town, and five (2.8%) grew up on a farm. At Oklahoma State University, almost one-half of the respondents ($f = 77$, 47%) reported having grown up on a farm, 57 (34.8%) grew up in a rural, non-farm setting, 26 (15.9%) reported growing up in a subdivision in a town or city, and two (1.2%) grew up in a downtown area of a city or town. At the University of Florida, 38 (21.3%) students indicated they were fluent in a language other than English, and 11 (6.7%) indicated they were fluent in a language other than English at Oklahoma State University (see Table 1).

Most of the respondents at both universities (93.6%) indicated having a grade point average of 2.5 and above. Large majorities of the students had not transferred from another institution (see Table 1). In addition to students' personal characteristics, respondents reported whether they had engaged in IEs before and while in college. To determine students' IEs before and during college, respondents were asked if they had taken part in 11 specific IEs. Table 2 shows the results for engagement before attending college, including the differences in

response based on university attended. Overall, the respondents at the University of Florida had participated in more IEs before attending college than respondents at Oklahoma State University with one exception (see Table 2). A larger percentage of the students at Oklahoma State University had met with international exchange students than respondents at the University of Florida. The most likely IE of the respondents before attending college at both universities was going to an international restaurant, and the least likely IE of the respondents before college at both universities was participating in a semester-long study abroad program.

Responses from students at the two universities were compared using independent samples t-tests to identify significant differences. Five of the 11 items had significant percent differences ($p < .05$) when compared. The University of Florida students had a significantly higher percentage of participation in four of the five IEs before college, including attending an international festival, traveling individually or with family/friends to another country, taking a class focused on international issues, and going to an international restaurant (see Table 2). Oklahoma State University had significantly more respondents who had met with an international exchange student before college than did the University of Florida (see Table 2).

Table 1

Comparison of University of Florida and Oklahoma State University Students' Personal Characteristics

Variable	University of Florida (<i>n</i> = 178)		Oklahoma State University (<i>n</i> = 164)	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
Gender				
Female	112	62.9	103	62.8
Male	66	37.1	61	37.2
Educational status				
Freshman	7	3.9	76	46.3
Sophomore	48	27.0	44	26.8
Junior	68	38.2	34	20.7
Senior	55	30.9	8	4.9
Master's	0	-	1	0.6
Ethnicity				
Asian	16	9.0	0	0.0
Black	14	7.9	1	0.6
Hispanic	26	14.6	6	3.7
American Indian/Native American	0	0.0	19	11.6
White	115	64.6	134	81.7
Multiracial	6	3.4	2	1.2
Location where lived growing up				
Farm	5	2.8	77	47.0
Rural, not farm	26	14.6	57	34.8
Subdivision in town or city	136	76.4	26	15.9
Downtown area in a city or town	11	6.2	2	1.2
Grade point average				
4.0 or greater	8	4.5	15	9.1
3.99 – 3.50	63	35.4	40	24.4
3.49 – 3.00	73	41.0	60	36.6
2.99 – 2.50	27	15.2	36	22.0
2.49 or less	6	3.4	12	7.3
Fluent in a language other than English				
Yes	38	21.3	11	6.7
No	140	78.7	151	92.1
Transfer student				
Yes	26	14.6	40	24.4
No	152	85.4	123	75.0

Table 2

Comparison of University of Florida and Oklahoma State University Students' International Experiences Before College

Variable	University of Florida (<i>n</i> = 178)		Oklahoma State University (<i>n</i> = 164)		% Diff.
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	
Attended an international festival	114	64.0	52	31.7	32.3*
Traveled individually or with family/friends to another country	127	71.3	64	39.0	32.3*
Met with international exchange students	65	36.5	96	58.5	22.0*
Took a class focused on international issues	61	34.3	23	14.0	20.3*
Went to an international restaurant	157	88.2	112	68.3	19.9*
Hosted an international visitor in their house	20	11.2	9	5.5	5.7
Went on a church mission trip to another Country	22	12.4	13	7.9	4.5
Had an international guest speaker in a class	92	51.7	81	49.4	2.3
Participated in a semester-long study abroad	4	2.2	0	0	2.2
Participated in an international study tour	9	5.1	6	3.7	1.4
Participated in a short-term study abroad	7	3.9	5	3.0	0.9

Note. * $p < .05$. The respondents could select multiple experiences.

Table 3 shows the results for engagement while attending college, including the differences in response based on university attended. The respondents at the University of Florida had a higher percentage of participation in each IE while in college than the respondents at Oklahoma State University. It is important to note, however, the respondents at the University of Florida had more time in college (on average) than the respondents at Oklahoma State University. The two IEs with the highest percentage of participation were the same at both universities. They were going to an international restaurant and having an international guest speaker in a class (see Table 3).

Nine of the 11 items had significant differences ($p < .05$) between respondents at the

two universities with students at the University of Florida exhibiting a significantly higher percentage of participation in all nine IEs while in college (see Table 3). The item with the largest difference in participation between the two universities was attending an international festival with 38.2% more of the respondents at the University of Florida reporting participation than respondents at Oklahoma State University. The only two items where significant differences between respondents at the University of Florida and Oklahoma State University did not exist was participation in a short-term study abroad and participation in a church mission trip to another country. At both universities, very few respondents reported participating in these IEs.

Table 3

Comparison of University of Florida and Oklahoma State University Students' International Experiences While in College

Variable	University of Florida (n = 178)		Oklahoma State University (n = 164)		% Diff.
	f	%	f	%	
Attending an international festival	94	52.8	24	14.6	38.2*
Travel individually or with family/friends to another country	87	48.9	18	11.0	37.9*
Taking a class focused on international issues	78	43.8	13	7.9	35.9*
Going to an international restaurant	140	78.7	75	45.7	33.0*
International guest speaker in a class	102	57.3	69	42.1	15.2*
Meeting with international exchange students	84	47.2	59	36.0	11.2*
Residing with an international student	24	13.5	5	3.0	10.5*
International study tour	19	10.7	5	3.0	7.7*
Participating in a semester-long study abroad Program	9	5.1	0	0	5.1*
Participating in a short-term study abroad	13	7.3	7	4.3	3.0
Church mission trip to another country	8	4.5	5	3.0	1.5

Note. * $p < .05$. The respondents could select multiple experiences.

Objective two sought to describe the students' perceived motivators and barriers influencing their decision to participate in IEs. To conduct the perceived motivators analysis, a five-point, summated-rating scale was used to measure the level of importance respondents associated with 11 items. Mean ratings were categorized according to the real limits standard:

1.00 to 1.49 = *not at all important*, 1.50 to 2.49 = *slightly important*, 2.50 to 3.49 = *somewhat important*, 3.50 to 4.49 = *moderately important*, and 4.50 to 5.00 = *extremely important*. Mean scores were calculated for the items and then averaged together to create a composite mean score for the construct (see Table 4).

Table 4

Comparison of University of Florida and Oklahoma State University Students' Perceived Motivators and Barriers Influencing Their Decision to Participate in International Experiences

Construct	University of Florida (n = 178)		Oklahoma State University (n = 164)		Mean Diff.
	M	SD	M	SD	
Motivators	3.78	.74	3.69	.81	.09
Barriers	2.85	.45	2.98	.43	.13*

Note. * $p < .05$

Descriptive results showed that respondents from both schools perceived the overall importance of the motivator items as *moderately important* ($M_A = 3.78$, $SD_A = .74$) ($M_B = 3.69$, $SD_B = .81$) (see Table 4). In addition, a five-point, summated-rating scale was used to measure the level of agreement respondents expressed for 15 items identified as barriers to participating in IEs. The real limits for the scale were 1.00 to 1.49 = *strongly disagree*, 1.50 to 2.49 = *disagree*, 2.50 to 3.49 = *neutral*, 3.50 to 4.49 = *agree*, and 4.50 to 5.00 = *strongly agree*. The results showed that respondents from both schools exhibited a neutral level of agreement overall with the IE barrier items ($M_A = 2.85$, $SD_A = .45$; $M_B = 2.98$, $SD_B = .43$). Composite mean differences between the two universities were compared to identify significant differences (see Table 4).

Objective three sought to determine if differences between students' perceived motivators and barriers to participate in IEs were associated with selected personal characteristics, including the university they attended. Multiple linear regression, using the stepwise method, was used to develop a series of predictive models. Personal characteristics including gender, where the student lived growing up, ethnicity, grade point average, educational status, transfer student status, fluent in a language other than English, international

experience before college, and international experience while in college were dummy coded and used as the independent variables in the regression models (Field, 2009).

In the first set of models, the respondents' composite mean scores for their perceived motivators were used as the dependent variables within each school. The model for the University of Florida explained 13% of the variance in perceived motivators while the model for Oklahoma State University explained 19% of the variance in perceived motivators (see Table 5). The only significant predictor in the model for the University of Florida was the participant's international experience while in college. The more international experiences in which students at the University of Florida engaged while in college, the higher level of perceived motivation they expressed. Two significant predictors of motivators for Oklahoma State University respondents were found. Male students at Oklahoma State University had a significantly lower perception of motivators than their female counterparts, and the respondents at Oklahoma State University who were fluent in a language other than English reported a significantly lower level of motivation to participate in an IE than those students not fluent in another language (see Table 5).

Table 5

Comparison of University of Florida and Oklahoma State University Students' Perceived Motivators Influencing Their Decision to Participate in International Experiences Depending on Selected Personal Experiences and University Attended

	University of Florida (<i>n</i> = 178) <i>R</i> ² = .13		Oklahoma State University (<i>n</i> = 164) <i>R</i> ² = .19	
Constant	<i>β</i>	<i>p</i> -value	<i>β</i>	<i>p</i> -value
Male	-.02	.79	-.18	.03*
Lived growing up				
Downtown area in a city or town	--	--	--	--
Rural, not a farm	-.06	.65	.46	.10
Subdivision, in town or city	-.19	.20	-.29	.20
Farm	-.15	.12	.53	.09
Ethnicity				
White (Non-Hispanic)	--	--	--	--
Asian	.03	.74	-	-
Black (Non-Hispanic)	-.03	.75	.09	.26
Hispanic	.14	.15	-.13	.13
American Indian/Native American	-	-	.12	.13
Multiracial	-.05	.50	-.06	.48
Grade point average				
4.0 or greater	--	--	--	--
3.99 – 3.50	-.11	.57	-.19	.14
3.49 – 3.00	-.15	.45	-.12	.38
2.99 – 2.50	-.05	.76	-.22	.10
2.49 or less	-.17	.87	-.19	.06
Educational Status				
Freshman	--	--	--	--
Sophomore	-.19	.35	-.18	.07
Junior	-.26	.23	-.10	.37
Senior	-.31	.14	.04	.69
Transfer student	-.10	.22	.07	.50
Fluent in a language other than English	-.00	.97	-.23	.01*
Previous international experience	-.04	.65	-.02	.84
International experience while in college	.21	.04*	-.01	.96

Note. **p* < .05

In the second set of models, the respondents' composite mean scores for perceived barriers were used as the dependent variables within each school. The model for the University of Florida explained 10% of the

variance in perceived barriers, and the model for Oklahoma State University explained 16% of the variance in perceived barriers (see Table 6). The only significant predictor in the model for the University of Florida was where the

participant lived growing up. If a participant had grown up in a rural area or in a subdivision the person was significantly less likely to perceive barriers to IEs than a participant who had grown up in a downtown area in a city or a town. In

addition, one significant predictor of perceived barriers for Oklahoma State University respondents was found. At Oklahoma State University, a male student was more likely to perceive barriers to participation in IEs than a female.

Table 6

Comparison of University of Florida and Oklahoma State University Students' Perceived Barriers Influencing Their Decision to Participate in International Experiences Depending on Selected Personal Characteristics and University Attended

	University of Florida (<i>n</i> = 178) <i>R</i> ² = .10		Oklahoma State University (<i>n</i> = 164) <i>R</i> ² = .16	
	β	<i>p</i> -value	β	<i>p</i> -value
Constant				
Male	-.01	.98	.26	.00*
Lived growing up				
Downtown area in a city or town	--	--	--	--
Rural, not a farm	-.32	.02*	.09	.75
Subdivision, in town or city	-.35	.02*	.02	.92
Farm	-.09	.38	.06	.86
Ethnicity				
White (Non-Hispanic)	--	--	--	--
Asian	.04	.67	-	-
Black (Non-Hispanic)	.03	.73	.02	.79
Hispanic	.03	.76	-.03	.70
American Indian/Native American	-	-	.04	.62
Multiracial	.11	.17	.04	.60
Grade point average				
4.0 or greater	--	--	--	--
3.99 – 3.50	.16	.41	.16	.24
3.49 – 3.00	.05	.80	.17	.22
2.99 – 2.50	.15	.34	.17	.21
2.49 or less	-.04	.70	.20	.06
Educational Status				
Freshman	--	--	--	--
Sophomore	.17	.41	.16	.11
Junior	.11	.63	-.01	.97
Senior	.13	.55	.11	.23
Transfer student	-.10	.25	-.03	.80
Fluent in a language other than English	.07	.46	.09	.33
Previous international experience	.01	.90	.05	.60
International experience while in college	.05	.63	-.11	.27

Note. **p* < .05

Conclusions, Recommendations, and Implications

The results of the study show that students at the University of Florida participated in more international experiences before college than students at Oklahoma State University. Because the University of Florida is geographically located in the south and physically closer to international destinations than Oklahoma State University, this finding was not surprising. Moreover, the majority of the University of Florida respondents were upper classmen (juniors and seniors) and the Oklahoma State University respondents were lower classmen (freshmen and sophomores). Therefore, the University of Florida respondents may have participated in more IEs while in college simply because they had additional time of university attendance in which to participate. This is a limitation of the study and should be noted when interpreting the results relying on the while in college IE participation construct.

Further, students at both schools perceived the overall importance of participating in IEs as moderately important. A belief viewed as favorable creates a positive attitude toward a behavior thereby increasing the likelihood an individual will decide to engage in said action (Ajzen, 2002). When considering the recruitment of students to IEs, no matter their geographic characteristics, agricultural educators should focus on the personal life experiences students will gain from the IE, the opportunity to live in another country, and individual personal development as recruitment incentives.

Even though students from both schools exhibited a neutral level of agreement with the IE barrier items, a statistically significant difference was found between schools. Beliefs regarding impediments, such as perceived barriers, influence an individual's level of perceived control over his or her ability to participate in activities (Ajzen, 2002), including IEs. Therefore, agricultural educators need to not only create opportunities for students to participate in IEs but also assist them in finding financial support to make that participation possible.

In addition, male students at Oklahoma State University were less motivated and perceived

stronger barriers to participating in IEs than female students. Perhaps males from Oklahoma State University, who were more likely to have grown up in rural areas, perceived the need to work on the home farm or elsewhere in their local communities and therefore do not view IEs as important. Moreover, the location where respondents grew up influenced their barrier responses at the University of Florida but had little impact on the students at Oklahoma State University. At the University of Florida, the students who grew up in a downtown area in a city or town perceived more barriers to participating in IEs than those who had lived in rural areas or subdivisions. This finding suggests the subjective norm in urbanized areas may be less supportive of IEs than that of more suburban or rural areas (Ajzen, 2002).

The results of this investigation show that, in general, undergraduate agricultural students at both land-grant universities, despite their differences in personal characteristics, were not very engaged in IEs. The lack of engagement in IEs is consistent with the Institute of International Education's (2010) findings reporting that agricultural student participation in study abroad opportunities was declining. If employers worldwide are emphasizing global competence when making hiring decisions (Starkey & Osler, 2001), it is important for agricultural educators to encourage and facilitate students in making decisions to gain IEs that stand to increase their employability.

The findings from this inquiry suggest the data collected at the two universities studied is only the beginning of being able to understand how the geographic diversity of an institution impacts student participation in IEs. To understand this phenomenon better, this study should be replicated in other states and the results compared to this study's findings. Perhaps a comparison of schools in all regions of the United States would develop further the understanding of agricultural educators on how different universities are impacting student participation in IEs.

In addition, this study could be replicated in universities outside of the United States and those results compared to findings gathered at U.S. institutions. Research conducted by the Institute of International Education (2010) has

shown the United States is behind many European countries in developing a sense of global competence in college students. By understanding better the motivators and the barriers at non-U.S. universities that are successful at globalizing students, U.S. institutions may be able to identify and replicate

their internationalization efforts. Finally, a qualitative study (e.g., personal interviews) conducted with students who have engaged in IEs would assist in developing a deeper understanding of how they overcame barriers to their participation.

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