

SELECTED AGRICULTURE STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF INTERNATIONAL
EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE

A Thesis

by

CHIA-WEI CHANG

Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies of
Texas A&M University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

August 2011

Major Subject: Agricultural Leadership, Education, and Communications

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Approved by:

Co-Chairs of Committee,	Tracy A. Rutherford
	Gary J. Wingenbach
Committee Members,	Leroy G. Dorsey
	Wilmaria Harder
Head of Department,	John Elliot

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ABSTRACT

Selected Agriculture Students' Perceptions of International Educational Experience.

(August 2011)

Chia-Wei Chang, B.A., Fu-Jen Catholic University, Taiwan

Co-Chairs of Advisory Committee: Dr. Tracy A. Rutherford
Dr. Gary J. Wingebach

This study examined College of Agriculture students' perceptions and concerns about international educational experiences. The purpose of this study was to determine students' perceptions about international educational experiences, students' interests in gaining international educational experiences, students' ratings of selected factors that may prompt them to acquire these experiences, or barriers that prohibit them from gaining international educational experiences. A stratified random sample of students ($N = 153$) was asked to complete an online questionnaire. The response rate was 67%. Participants ($n = 98$) included 27 from Tarleton State University and 71 from Texas A&M University. 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. Descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation) and correlations were used to analyze the data. The results showed that only 4% of the respondents had participated in study abroad programs. About 77% of the respondents were interested in gaining international educational experiences. Students believed that gaining international educational experiences helped them enrich

their overall life experience, seek opportunities to live in another country or culture, and helped their résumé. Respondents were willing to join the study abroad program held by their universities. They preferred to register for a university faculty-led study abroad, spending one to ten weeks abroad, university study abroad course as an internship, directed study, research project, or similar international experience, and register for university courses at a university study center. The barriers students faced were financial constraints—paying for the program or funding personal living expenses and studies during the study abroad, finding affordable and adequate housing—and language barriers. Students who believed that joining in study abroad programs would improve their competitiveness in the global marketplace were more willing to gain international educational experiences than students who didn't think that joining in study abroad programs would improve their competitiveness in the global marketplace.

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this degree to my family and friends. Thank you for all the support and love during the time it took me to pursue a master's degree. Without you, this experience would have been overwhelming.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank all of the people who have impacted my life.

To my family: Thank you for your support through whole my life. Though I am far away from you, I know that you always stay with me. I am so lucky to have a wonderful family. Please stay safe and well for me.

To my friend: thank you for your help and support. Without you, I might have had a harder and lonelier time in College Station.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT	iii
DEDICATION	v
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	vi
TABLE OF CONTENTS	vii
LIST OF TABLES	ix
CHAPTER	
I INTRODUCTION.....	1
Conceptual Framework	2
Purpose	5
Objectives.....	6
Design.....	6
Population.....	6
Sample	7
Instrumentation.....	8
Data Collection.....	10
Data Analysis	10
II COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION INVOLVEMENT	11
Introduction	11
Conceptual Framework	11
Purpose of Study	13
Methods	14
Results	18
Conclusions and Recommendations.....	28

CHAPTER	Page	
III	DIFFERENCES IN COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE STUDENTS’ INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION INVOLVEMENT BY DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS.....	31
	Introduction	31
	Conceptual Framework	31
	Purpose of Study	33
	Methods.....	34
	Results	37
	Conclusions and Recommendations.....	47
IV	SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS.....	50
	Research Implications and Recommendations.....	50
	Practical Implications and Recommendations	52
	REFERENCES.....	55
	APPENDIX.....	60
	VITA	69

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE		Page
2.1	Demographics of Student Respondents (n = 98).....	19
2.2	Students' Interests and Preferences in International Education Experiences (n = 98).....	21
2.3	Students' Ratings of Selected Factors That May Motivate Them to Study Abroad (n = 48)	22
2.4	Students' Rankings of the Top Three Factors That May Motivate Them to Study Abroad (n = 48)	23
2.5	Students' Rating of Factors That May Prohibit Them to Study Abroad (n = 45).....	25
2.6	Students' Rankings of the Top Three Factors That May Prohibit Them to Study Abroad (n = 45)	26
2.7	Relationship between Perceptions of International Educational Experiences and Willingness to Study Abroad (n = 93)	27
3.1	Demographics of Student Respondents (N = 98).....	38
3.2	Students' Ratings of Selected Concerns about Gaining International Educational Experience (n = 47).....	40
3.3	Students' Rankings of the Top Three Concerns about Gaining International Educational Experiences (n = 47).....	42
3.4	Students' Information Sources and Frequencies of Use When Considering Motivating Factors for Learning about Study Abroad (n = 44).....	43
3.5	Students' Information Sources and Frequencies of Use When Considering Challenges to Learning about Study Abroad (n = 31) ..	44
3.6	Differences in Students' Perceptions of International Educational Experiences When Compared by Gender (n = 98)	45
3.7	Differences in Students' Perceptions of International Educational Experiences When Compared By University (n = 98).....	46

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

International elements are essential, integral, and central to the education, research and missions of agricultural universities (Acker & Scanes, 1998). Thus, understanding students' perceptions, concerns, and interests of gaining international educational experiences are important to design the appropriate study abroad program for students.

This study was based on four objectives:

1. Ascertain students' interests in gaining international educational experiences.
2. Describe students' ratings of selected factors that may prompt them to acquire, or barriers that prohibit them from gaining, international educational experiences.
3. Determine if significant relationships exist between students' perceptions of international educational experiences and selected factors.
4. Examine differences existed in students' perceptions of selected factors/barriers to international educational experiences when compared by demographic variables.

This thesis follows the style of the *Journal of International Agricultural and Extension Education*.

Conceptual Framework

It is time for the global generation. Ludwig (2007) stated, “We may think local, but actions have global consequences” (p. 5). In previous studies, globalization of research and graduate education in agriculture were key drivers of quality improvement (Acker & Scanes, 2000). Shinn, Wingenbach, Lindner, Briers, and Baker (2009) found that international agricultural and extension education can help prepare people as global citizens to make better decisions and to be aware of the consequences of their actions. Most 1862 land grant universities provide undergraduate courses with international agricultural content and focus (Brooks, Frick & Bruening, 2006). Also, colleges of agriculture in 1862 land grant universities “are currently utilizing study abroad programs; faculty-based programs; hosting international training programs and visitors; increasing enrollment and awareness of international students on campus; and encouraging agreements and contracts with foreign institutions”(p. 98).

The world is changing and challenging. Friedman (2005) posited that because of the technological revolution many more people around the world can compete, connect, and collaborate in a new phase of globalization. Wingenbach et al. (2003) believed that the lack of international experiences resulted in lower levels of international knowledge and contributed to a system that does not value internationalization. Shinn, Wingenbach, Lindner, Briers, and Baker (2009) concluded that international agricultural and extension education is a knowledge exchange system involving people in a persuasive process of educating global participants and preparing future farmers, agricultural specialists, and agribusiness leaders in a changing world. The American Council on Education (2002)

found that study abroad greatly enhanced students' foreign language abilities, cross-cultural skills, and understanding of other cultures. However, Irani, Place, and Friedel (2006) stated that agricultural students still had limited international experiences and backgrounds. Moore, Williams, Boyd and Elbert (2011) examined agricultural leadership and development senior students in Texas A&M University and found "only 4.1% have participated in a university study abroad program" (p. 121).

In the past ten years, only 1.1% to 1.6% of United States' students participated in study abroad in agriculture disciplines (Institute of International Education, 2010). That rate is much lower than study abroad participation in social science disciplines (20.1% to 22.6%). Since international involvement is essential, why do agriculture students rarely join study abroad programs?

In Andreasen's (2003) study, both external and internal barriers explained or accounted for the lack of participation in international work. External barriers included the lack of time, financial constraints, conflict with classes, and lack of opportunities. The internal barriers were innate fears such as fear of different cultures, ethnic prejudices, cultural biases, lack of desire, lack of language skills/not being able to communicate, and fear of political unrest. Briers, Shinn, and Nguyen's (2010) research found the greatest barrier that Texas A&M University students faced was financial concerns; another difficulty for students was language barriers. Barriers affecting students' participation in study abroad programs may include lack of cultural knowledge, fear of the unknown, lifestyle change, lack of family support, and time (Wingenbach, Chmielewski, Smith, Piña, & Hamilton, 2006). In addition, Bruening and Shao (2005) pointed out that the

faculty who had international biases would give students limited support for studying abroad, which could explain low student participation in study abroad was low. However, students believed that having international academic experiences would improve their competitiveness in the global marketplace (Briers, Shinn, & Nguyen, 2010).

In Place, Vergot, Dragon, and Hightower's (2008) research, international involvement was crucial for increasing global knowledge and understanding, and positive behavior and attitude changes. People who have international learning experiences can contribute to their personal and professional development. In Bruening and Frick's (2004) research, international courses stimulated students to learn how to solve problems via practical experience. In addition, they found that students who have international education experiences are motivated to learn more languages. Also, through the international experience, they can gain unique perspectives and insights that local-based classes cannot offer. Moreover, international experiences helped students to realize that their previous perceptions and understanding of involvement in international experiences were narrow. In Bruening and Shao's (2005) study, the experts believed that study abroad was one type of experience that enhanced learning far beyond the traditional lecture methods that tend to dominate delivery techniques used in higher education.

What do agricultural students who have had international education experiences think about those experiences? Zhai and Scheer (2002) found that agricultural college students who had international education experiences believed that studying abroad was a useful experience in promoting students' personal development and global

competencies. Moreover, study abroad programs improved students' global perspectives and development of intercultural sensitivities.

In previous studies, Zhai and Scheer (2004) stated students with a higher level of global perceptions would hold more positive attitudes toward cultural diversity. Moreover, "contact with international people also had a positive relationship with global perspectives and attitudes toward cultural diversity" (p. 47). Thus, Zhai and Scheer suggested that colleges of agriculture incorporate global perspectives and attitudes toward diversity into their student development programs. Briers et al. (2010) also pointed out that females were more willing than males to consider studying abroad. Also, Briers et al. found there was a "positive relationship between students' willingness to study abroad and their beliefs that participating in a study abroad program would improve their competitiveness in the global marketplace" (p. 15).

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to determine if differences exist in students' perceptions and barriers of international educational experiences when compared by demographic factors, and if relationships exist between students' perceptions of international educational experiences and selected factors.

Objectives

The objectives of the study were to:

1. Ascertain students' interests in gaining international educational experiences.
2. Describe students' ratings of selected factors that may prompt them to acquire or barriers that prohibit them from gaining international educational experiences.
3. Determine if significant relationships exist between students' perceptions of international educational experiences and selected factors.
4. Examine differences existed in students' perceptions of selected factors and barriers to international educational experiences when compared by demographic variables.

Design

The research used a descriptive design to measure college of agriculture students' perceptions and barriers of international education involvement at Texas A&M University and Tarleton State University. These two universities are in the same university system and both are located in Texas. The cross-sectional survey was used to collect the data from college of agriculture students at Texas A&M University and Tarleton State University. Both of these two groups were surveyed at approximately the same point in time (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009).

Population

The population of interest ($N = 431$) included selected college students enrolled in ANSC 107-General Animal Science, in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences

at Texas A&M University ($N = 305$) and a similar undergraduate course ANSC 107-Introduction to Animal Science, in the College of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences at Tarleton State University ($N = 126$). These introductory courses provide basic knowledge of the importance of livestock and meat industries; scientific animal agriculture; selection, reproduction, nutrition, management and marketing of cattle; evaluation and processing of meat, wool and mohair. The population ($N = 431$) included students from a variety of majors (e.g., animal science, biology, agricultural education, etc.) and classifications (e.g., freshman, sophomore, etc.).

Sample

Sample size ($n = 153$) was calculated on the basis of the sampling size formula by Dillman, Smyth, and Christian (2009). The researcher used an 80/20 split with a 5% sampling error at a 95% confidence level (Dillman et al.). The 80/20 split was chosen due to the variance in the population with respect to the subject of interest. All classifications — freshman, sophomore, junior, and senior — of male and female students, were the target audience. Stratified random sampling is a process in which subgroups are selected for the sample in the same proportion as they are present in population, which increases the likelihood of representativeness (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009). The subgroups were students in the colleges of agriculture enrolled in ANSC 107 at Texas A&M University ($n = 116$) and Tarleton State University ($n = 37$). These samples were reduced by errant e-mail addresses (four addresses were invalid) and students' rights to opt out of the research ($n = 2$); 98 students (27 from Tarleton State

and 71 from Texas A&M) provided useable responses to the survey. The response rate was 67%.

Instrumentation

The research instrument was developed based on three earlier student questionnaires. “The original instrument was an online questionnaire used to determine attributes of European Union students” (Plompen & Myrrell, 2006; as cited in Briers et al., 2010, p. 7). Later, the instrument was altered to a paper copy questionnaire to survey students at Armenian State Agrarian University (Briers et al., 2010; Shinn et al., 2008, 2009). The third iteration was used to examine students in College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at Texas A&M University (Briers et al., 2010). Thus, the instrument applied in this study was the fourth adaptation, in which editorial changes to the Briers’ et al. (2010) instrument were made to be more representative of all colleges of agriculture, not just Texas A&M University.

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.

To measure respondents’ preferences for international educational experiences, participants ranked six preferences from most to least likely according to the effect each would have on their decisions about international educational experiences. Selected examples of preferences included *register for a university faculty-led study abroad spending 1 to 10 weeks abroad*, *register for university courses at a university study*

center (e. g., Costa Rica, etc.), and register for courses at a foreign university, with transfer credits back to your university. Respondents ranked each of the six preferences using a scale where 1 = most preferred to 6 = least preferred.

Positive influences on students' desires to gain international educational experiences were measured using 10 motivational factors. Selected examples of motivational factors included *increased employability, learn another language, and overall life experience.* Respondents ranked each of the 10 motivational factors using a scale that ranged from 1 = does not motivate to 4 = motivates a lot. Also, respondents were asked to rank-order the top three motivational factors with 1 being the top factor that motivated them to acquire international educational experiences.

Negative influences, also known as barriers, on students' desires to gain international educational experiences were measured using 14 prohibitive factors. Selected examples of prohibitive factors included *paying for the program or funding my living expenses and studies during the study abroad, finding affordable and adequate housing, and language barriers.* Respondents ranked each of the 14 prohibitive factors using a scale that ranged from 1 = not difficult to 4 = very difficult. Also, respondents were asked to rank-order the top three prohibitive factors with 1 being the top factor that prohibited them from acquiring international educational experiences.

Finally, perceptions about international educational experiences were measured using two questions related to competitiveness in the global marketplace. Specifically, students were asked if *they believed their current degree would improve their competitiveness in the global marketplace, and if participating in a study abroad*

program would improve their competitiveness in the global marketplace. Their response options were yes, neutral/unsure, and no. Students' demographic information (gender, ethnicity, language, finance of studies, and GPA) was collected with the survey instrument. The complete survey instruments are found in Appendix A.

Data Collection

Data were collected with an online questionnaire. A personalized pre-notice e-mail was sent to students two days before the survey. Follow-up reminders were sent to non-respondents every three days after the initial distribution for approximately three weeks. Participants' names and e-mail addresses remained confidential.

Data Analysis

Data were automatically coded in a database for statistical analysis. The analysis used the SPSS statistical software package. Descriptive statistics will be computed. Data analysis was modeled after the procedures applied in Briers' et al. (2010) study of perceptions and aspirations of College of Agriculture and Life Sciences students involving international educational experiences. Calculations were of frequencies, percentages, means, standard deviations, cross-tabulations, and correlations (Briers et al., 2010).

CHAPTER II

COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION INVOLVEMENT

Introduction

International elements are essential, integral, and central to the education, research, and missions of agricultural universities (Acker & Scanes, 1998). Ludwig (2007) pointed out that “Integrating solutions-focused local and global service learning with study abroad brings new internationality to learning outcomes” (p. 10). Because of global awareness and improved technologies, borders between nations are disappearing (Acker & Scanes, 2000). The barriers of international involvement are also weakening. Wingenbach et al (2003) found that students’ knowledge of international agricultural policies, products, peoples, and cultures could be advanced through increased experiential learning via study abroad. Irani, Place, and Friedel (2006) found that the greater degree to which agricultural students recognized the importance of international involvement, the more likely it was that they intended to participate in international programs and activities while in college. And, the less that they sensed potential barriers to the participation existed, the more likely they were to express their intent to participate.

Conceptual Framework

The world is changing and challenging. Friedman (2005) posited because of the technological revolution, many more people around the world can compete, connect, and collaborate in a new phase of globalization. Wingenbach et al. (2003) found that the lack

of international experiences resulted in lower levels of international knowledge and contributed to a system that does not value internationalization. Shinn, Wingenbach, Lindner, Briers, and Baker (2009) concluded that international agricultural and extension education is a knowledge exchange system involving people in a persuasive process of educating global participants and preparing future farmers, agricultural specialists, and agribusiness leaders in a changing world. However, “current efforts in the internationalization of education are less than needed” (Wingenbach, Chmielewski, Smith, Piña, & Hamilton, 2006, p. 87). In the past ten years, only 1.1% to 1.6% of United States’ students participated in study abroad in agriculture disciplines (Institute of International Education, 2010). The rate is much lower than studying abroad participation in social science disciplines (20.1% to 22.6%). Since international involvement is essential, why do agriculture students rarely participate study abroad programs?

In Andreasen’s (2003) study, both external and internal barriers explained or accounted for the lack of participation in international work. External barriers included lack of time, financial constraints, conflict with classes, and lack of opportunities. The internal barriers were innate fears such as fear of different cultures, ethnic prejudices, cultural biases, lack of desire, lack of language skills/not being able to communicate, and fear of political unrest. Briers, Shinn, and Nguyen’s (2010) research found the greatest barrier that Texas A&M University students faced was financial concerns; another difficulty for students was language barriers.

What do agricultural students who have had international education experiences think about those experiences? Zhai and Scheer (2002) found that agricultural college students who had international education experiences believed that studying abroad was a useful experience in promoting students' personal development and global competencies. Moreover, study abroad programs improved students' global perspectives and development of intercultural sensitivities.

In previous studies, Zhai and Scheer (2004) stated students with a higher level of global perceptions held more positive attitudes toward cultural diversity. Moreover, "contact with international people also had a positive relationship with global perspectives and attitudes toward cultural diversity" (p. 47). Thus, Zhai and Scheer suggested that colleges of agriculture incorporate global perspectives and attitudes toward diversity into their student development programs. Briers et al. (2010) pointed out that females were more willing than males to consider studying abroad. Also, Briers et al. found there was a "positive relationship between students' willingness to study abroad and their beliefs that participating in a study abroad program would improve their competitiveness in the global marketplace" (p. 15).

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study was to determine students' perceptions about international educational experiences. Specific objectives were to:

1. Ascertain students' interests in gaining international educational experiences;

2. Describe students' ratings of selected factors that may prompt them to acquire or barriers that prohibit them from gaining international educational experiences;
and
3. Determine if significant relationships exist between students' perceptions of international educational experiences and selected factors.

Methods

The research used a correlational design 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. These two universities are in the same university system and both are located in Texas. Both of these groups were surveyed at approximately the same point in time (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009).

The population of interest ($N = 431$) included selected college students enrolled in ANSC 107-General Animal Science, in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at Texas A&M University ($N = 305$) and a similar undergraduate course ANSC 107-Introduction to Animal Science, in the College of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences at Tarleton State University ($N = 126$). These introductory courses provide basic knowledge of the importance of livestock and meat industries; scientific animal agriculture; selection, reproduction, nutrition, management and marketing of cattle; evaluation and processing of meat, wool, and mohair. The population ($N = 431$) included students from a variety of majors (e.g., animal science, biology, agricultural education, etc.) and classifications (e.g., freshman, sophomore, etc.).

Sample size ($n = 153$) was calculated on the basis of the sampling size formula by Dillman, Smyth, and Christian (2009). The researcher used an 80/20 split with a 5% sampling error at a 95% confidence level (Dillman et al.). The 80/20 split was chosen due to the variance in the population with respect to the subject of interest. All classifications — freshman, sophomore, junior, and senior — of male and female students, were the target audience. Stratified random sampling is a process in which subgroups are selected for the sample in the same proportion as they are present in population, which increases the likelihood of representativeness (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009). The subgroups were students in the colleges of agriculture at Texas A&M University ($n = 116$) and Tarleton State University ($n = 37$). These samples were reduced by errant e-mail addresses (four addresses were invalid) and students' rights to opt out of the research ($n = 2$); 98 students (27 from Tarleton State and 71 from Texas A&M) provided useable responses to the survey. The response rate was 67%. The small size of this sample is recognized as a limitation of the study; caution is advised in generalizing these results to other populations.

To control for non-response error, the researcher used non-parametric tests (Independent Samples Mann-Whitney U Test) to compare early to late respondents on one question (students' preferences for acquiring international education experiences). No differences existed between early and late respondents (Lindner, Murphy, & Briers, 2001). Therefore, findings may be generalized to the target population ($N = 431$).

The research instrument was developed based on three earlier student questionnaires. "The original instrument was an online questionnaire used to determine

attributes of European Union students” (Plompen & Myrrell, 2006; as cited in Briers et al., 2010, p. 7). Later, the instrument was altered to a paper copy questionnaire to survey students at Armenian State Agrarian University (Briers et al., 2010; Shinn et al., 2008, 2009). The third iteration was used to examine students in College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at Texas A&M University (Briers et al., 2010). Thus, the instrument applied in this study was the fourth adaptation, in which editorial changes to the Briers’ et al. (2010) instrument were made to be more representative of all colleges of agriculture, not just for Texas A&M University.

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.

To measure respondents’ interests and preferences for international educational experiences, participants ranked six preferences from most to least likely according to the effect each would have on their decisions about international educational experiences. Selected examples of preferences included *register for a university faculty-led study abroad spending 1 to 10 weeks abroad*, *register for university courses at a university study center (e. g., Costa Rica, etc.)*, and *register for courses at a foreign university, with transfer credits back to your university*. Respondents ranked each of the six preferences using a scale where 1 = most preferred to 6 = least preferred.

Positive influences on students’ desires to gain international educational experiences were measured using 10 motivational factors. Selected examples of

motivational factors included *increased employability*, *learn another language*, and *overall life experience*. Respondents ranked each of the 10 motivational factors using a scale that ranged from 1 = does not motivate to 4 = motivates a lot. Also, respondents were asked to rank-order the top three motivational factors with 1 being the top factor that motivated them to acquire international educational experiences.

Negative influences, also known as barriers, on students' desires to gain international educational experiences were measured using 14 prohibitive factors. Selected examples of prohibitive factors included *paying for the program or funding my living expenses and studies during the study abroad*, *finding affordable and adequate housing*, and *language barriers*. Respondents ranked each of the 14 prohibitive factors using a scale that ranged from 1 (not difficult) to 4 (very difficult). Also, respondents were asked to rank-order the top three prohibitive factors with 1 being the top factor that prohibited them from acquiring international educational experiences.

Finally, perceptions about international educational experiences were measured using two questions related to competitiveness in the global marketplace. Specifically, students were asked if *they believed their current degree would improve their competitiveness in the global marketplace*, and if *participating in a study abroad program would improve their competitiveness in the global marketplace*. Their response options were yes, neutral/unsure, and no. Students' demographic information (gender, ethnicity, language, finance of studies, and GPA) was collected with the survey instrument.

Data were collected with an online questionnaire. A personalized pre-notice e-mail was sent to students two days before the survey. Follow-up reminders were sent to non-respondents every three days after the initial distribution for approximately three weeks. Participants' names and e-mail addresses remained confidential.

Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data. Correlational statistics were computed. Calculations were of frequencies, means, percentages, standard deviations, cross-tabulations, and correlations.

Results

Participants ($N = 98$) included 27 from Tarleton State University and 71 from Texas A&M University; 23 males and 68 females (Table 2.1). There were 71 Caucasians, 19 Hispanics, and 3 other ethnicities. Approximately 87% of respondents were working toward a Bachelor of Science degree; 6% were working toward a graduate or professional degree. There were 54 respondents who indicated that they spoke English only, while 30 respondents spoke English and Spanish, and 8 spoke English and other languages. Only 3% of the respondents had satisfying international educational experience while 89% had no international educational experiences (Table 2.1).

Table 2.1

Demographics of Student Respondents (N = 98)

Variables	Categories	<i>f</i> ^a	%
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, satisfying	3	3.1
	Yes, but not satisfying	1	1.0
How are you financing your current studies?	Family financial assistance	57	58.2
	Student loans	35	35.7
	Partial scholarship	32	32.7
	Savings from the previous work	29	29.6
	Part-time job	22	22.4
	Pay full tuition and fees personally	20	20.4
	Private loans	8	8.2
	Full scholarship	7	7.1

Note. ^aFrequencies may not total 98 because of missing data.

Objective One: Ascertain students' interests in gaining international educational experiences

Students were asked to consider what international education experiences. Six preferences from previous research (Briers et al., 2010; Plompen & Myrrell, 2006; Shinn et al., 2008) were included to describe the most common types of students' international education experiences. If they answered yes (76.5%), respondents then ranked the order of the six preferences. Those who were "not interested" (23.5%) did not answer the preference ranking. The results are shown in Table 2.2.

Respondents ranked *register for a university faculty-led study abroad spending 1 to 10 weeks abroad* as the most preferred ($\Sigma = 307$) choice for gaining international educational experiences. The other top ranked preferences were *register for university study abroad course as an internship, directed study, research project, or similar international experience* ($\Sigma = 285$) and *register for university courses at a university study center (e. g., Costa Rica, etc.)* ($\Sigma = 258$). The least ranked preference was *register for a program at a foreign university and complete the degree from that university.* ($\Sigma = 136$). These data show that students in this study 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.

Table 2.2

Students' Interests and Preferences in International Education Experiences (N = 98)

Would you consider studying abroad?							<i>f</i>	%
I would consider an international experience							75	76.5
No, I do not want to study abroad							23	23.5

Preferences of those who would consider studying abroad	Ranking Frequencies						Sum	Overall Rank ^a
	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	5 th	6 th		
Register for a university faculty-led study abroad spending 1 to 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

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

Objective Two: Describe students' ratings of selected factors that may prompt them to acquire or barriers that prohibit them from gaining international educational experiences

Students rated ten factors that may motivate them to acquire international educational experiences. Respondents reported that international educational experiences can enrich their *overall life experiences* ($M = 3.47$, $SD = .75$), having the *opportunity to live in another country or culture* ($M = 3.31$, $SD = .90$), and it *looks good on a résumé*

($M = 3.17$, $SD = .82$); were the top three motivating factors for acquiring international educational experiences. The factors *opportunity to work in another country after completing current degree* ($M = 2.30$, $SD = .95$), *importance placed by academic advisor/department* ($M = 2.40$, $SD = 1.09$), and *get a graduate degree* ($M = 2.48$, $SD = 1.09$) motivated students “a little” for acquiring international educational experiences (Table 2.3).

Table 2.3

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

Factors	Does not	Motivates	Motivates		M^a	SD
	motivate	a little	Motivates	a lot		
	f	f	f	f		
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.

^a Four-point Likert-type scale: 1 (Does not motivate) to 4 (Motivates a lot).

Respondents also ranked the top three factors, with 1 being the top factor that motivated them to acquire international educational experiences (Table 2.4). *Overall life experience* ($\Sigma = 80$), *opportunity to live in another country or culture* ($\Sigma = 52$), and *learn another language* ($\Sigma = 39$) were ranked as the top three motivational factors. No respondent ranked *importance placed by academic advisor/department* as one of top three motivational factors (Table 2.4).

Table 2.4

Students' Rankings of the Top Three Factors That May Motivate Them to Study Abroad (n = 48)

Factors	Ranking Frequencies			Sum	Overall Rank ^a
	1 st	2 nd	3 rd		
Overall life experience	18	10	6	80	1
Opportunity to live in another country or culture	10	8	6	52	2
Learn another language	6	5	11	39	3
Increased employability	5	8	4	35	4
Looks good on a résumé	1	6	7	22	5
Important stage in my personal development	2	2	6	16	6
Learn more about my academic specialization	3	2	1	14	7
Get a graduate degree	2	1	3	11	8
Opportunity to work in another country after completing current degree	1	1	6	11	8
Importance placed by academic advisor/department	-	-	-	-	10

Note. ^a Overall rank was determined by weighting rank scores in reverse order; 1st place rank scores received three points each, while 3rd place rank scores received one point each. Individual weighted scores for each factor were summed to derive the overall rank.

Students were asked to evaluate the level of difficulty (1 = Not difficult...4 = Very difficult) for 14 barriers that may have challenged them from gaining international educational experiences (Table 2.5). Respondents in this study concerned about financial issues. 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. Students believed that *losing opportunities in the U.S. if they left for a long time* ($M = 1.70$, $SD = .85$) and *their family situation being a difficulty* ($M = 1.96$, $SD = 1.02$) were “a little difficult,” along with seven other factors (Table 2.5), when considering international educational experiences.

Respondents also ranked the top three factors that prohibited them from acquiring international educational experiences (Table 2.6). Paperwork required for studying in another country ($\Sigma = 69$), transferring course credits ($\Sigma = 31$), and paying for the program or funding my living expenses and studies during the study abroad ($\Sigma = 26$) were ranked as the top three prohibiting factors. Finding affordable and adequate housing ($\Sigma = 3$), other financial constraints ($\Sigma = 3$) and language barriers ($\Sigma = 5$), were the least prohibitive factors in the ranking (Table 2.6).

Table 2.5

Students' Rating of Factors That May Prohibit Them to Study Abroad (n = 45)

Factor	Not difficult	A little difficult	Difficult	Very difficult	<i>M</i> ^a	<i>SD</i>
	<i>f</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>f</i>		
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.

^a Four-point Likert-type scale: 1 (Not difficult) to 4 (Very difficult).

Table 2.6

Students' Rankings of the Top Three Factors That May Prohibit Them to Study Abroad (n = 45)

Factors	Ranking			Sum	Overall Rank ^a
	Frequencies				
	1 st	2 nd	3 rd		
Paperwork required for studying in another country	18	6	3	69	1
Transferring course credits	1	10	8	31	2
Paying for the program or funding my living expenses and studies during the study abroad	4	3	8	26	3
Being allowed to study abroad by my major	3	4	7	24	4
It would be difficult for me to leave the U.S. and my family for a long time	4	2	1	17	5
My family situation makes it difficult for me to consider the opportunity	3	3	1	16	6
I may lose opportunities in the U.S. if I leave for a long time	2	2	4	14	7
It is stressful to prepare, organize, and implement	1	1	5	10	8
Graduate on time	1	3	1	10	8
Time required making preparations	1	2	1	8	10
Gaining admission or being accepted where I want to study	1	1	1	6	11
Language barriers	-	2	1	5	12
Finding affordable and adequate housing	1	-	-	3	13
Other financial constraints	-	1	1	3	13

Note. ^a Overall rank was determined by weighting rank scores in reverse order; 1st place rank scores received three points each, while 3rd place rank scores received one point each. Individual weighted scores for each factor were summed to derive the overall rank.

Objective Three: Determine if significant relationships existed between students'

perceptions of international educational experiences and selected factors

Respondents' perceptions of international educational experiences (being more competitive in the global market) were correlated with their willingness to study abroad to determine if significant relationships existed between the variables of interest. Table 2.7 shows the relationships between these selected variables. No significant ($p > .05$) relationship existed between *students' willingness to study abroad* and *their perceptions that their current degree would improve their competitiveness in the global marketplace*.

However, there was a low significant positive relationship (Cramer's $V = .27, p < .05$) between *students' willingness to study abroad* and their *perceptions that participating in study abroad programs would improve their competitiveness in the global marketplace* (Table 2.7).

Table 2.7

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	

* $p < .05$.

Conclusions and Recommendations

“Study abroad program helps facilitate academic programs, volunteer positions, conducting research, internships and exchange programs around the world” (Texas A&M University, 2009). However, in this study, only 4% of the respondents had participated in study abroad programs. The rate is low which may be explained by a majority of the respondents reporting they were undergraduates and the funding for their current degrees was mainly from family financial assistance and student loans. In addition, respondents were enrolled in ANSC 107 at Texas A&M University and a similar undergraduate course (ANSC 107) at Tarleton State University. These are introductory courses. Students may not have been enrolled in courses with more international perspectives of agriculture. Further research should be conducted to see if students enrolled in international agriculture-related courses have advanced perspectives about gaining international educational experiences.

In addition, only 6% were graduate respondents in this study. Their voice may easily be covered by the undergraduate students. Further research may focus on graduate students to see if they have different interests and perceptions of gaining international educational experiences.

Overall, students held positive attitudes toward gaining international educational experiences. About 77% of the respondents were interested in gaining international educational experiences. Students believed that gaining international educational experiences helped them enrich their overall life experience, seek opportunities to live in another country or culture, and helped their résumé. Respondents were willing to join the

study abroad program held by their universities. They preferred to register for a university faculty-led study abroad spending one to ten weeks abroad, university study abroad course as an internship, directed study, research project, or similar international experience, and register for university courses at a university study center. The results are congruent with the findings of Briers et al. (2010) that student preferred a faculty-led program or similar experiences.

The barriers students faced were financial constraints—paying for the program or funding personal living expenses and studies during the study abroad, finding affordable and adequate housing—and language barriers. The results are similar to the findings of Andreasen (2003). It should be noted that students ranked paperwork required for studying in another country and transferring courses credits as two top challenging factors. The result shows that universities should provide more administrative support for students who are interested in gaining international educational experiences.

There was a significant relationship between students' willingness to study abroad and their belief that joining in study abroad programs would improve their competitiveness in the global marketplace. Students who believed that joining in study abroad programs would improve their competitiveness in the global marketplace were more willing to gain international educational experiences than students who didn't think that joining in study abroad programs would improve their competitiveness in the global marketplace. This result supports the findings of Briers et al. (2010). American Council on Education (2002) found that study abroad greatly enhanced students' foreign language abilities, cross-cultural skills, and understanding of other cultures. University

or faculty members could inform students the benefit of gaining international educational experiences to encourage them to pursue international educational experiences.

This research should be expanded and continued to measure students' interests and perceptions of gaining international educational experiences. Gathering a larger sample of respondents will benefit further research by allowing researchers to gather more information about respondents. Further research may be conducted with respondents from several universities in Texas to determine the students' general perspectives of gaining international educational experiences.

CHAPTER III

DIFFERENCES IN COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE STUDENTS' INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION INVOLVEMENT BY DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS

Introduction

It is time for the global generation. Ludwig (2007) stated, “We may think local, but actions have global consequences” (p. 5). In previous studies, globalization of research and graduate education in agriculture was a key driver of quality improvement (Acker & Scanes, 2000). Shinn, Wingenbach, Lindner, Briers, and Baker (2009) found that international agricultural and extension education can help people preparing as global citizens to make better decisions and to be aware of the consequences of their actions. Most 1862 land grant universities provide undergraduate courses with international agricultural content and focus (Brooks, Frick, & Bruening, 2006). Also, colleges of agriculture in 1862 land grant universities “are currently utilizing study abroad programs; faculty-based programs; hosting international training programs and visitors; increasing enrollment and awareness of international students on campus; and encouraging agreements and contracts with foreign institutions”(p. 98).

Conceptual Framework

In this global world, international educational experience can improve competitiveness for students. American Council on Education (2002) found that study abroad greatly enhanced students' foreign language abilities, cross-cultural skills, and understanding of other cultures. However, Irani, Place, and Friedel (2006) stated that agricultural students still had limited international experiences and backgrounds.

According to the Institute of International Education (2010), in academic year 2008-09, only 1.1% of the U.S. students studied abroad in an agricultural field; even lower than in academic year 2000-01 (1.6%). Moore, Williams, Boyd, and Elbert (2011) examined agricultural leadership and development senior students in Texas A&M University and found “only 4.1% have participated in a university study abroad program” (p. 121).

Barriers affecting students’ participation in study abroad programs may include lack of cultural knowledge, fear of the unknown, lifestyle change, lack of family support, and time (Wingenbach, Chmielewski, Smith, Piña, & Hamilton, 2006). In addition, Bruening and Shao (2005) pointed out that the faculty who had international biases would give students limited support for studying abroad, which could explain why student participation in study abroad was low. However, students believed that having international academic experiences would improve their competitiveness in the global marketplace (Briers, Shinn, & Nguyen, 2010). The American Council on Education (2002) indicated that study abroad greatly enhanced students’ foreign language abilities, cross-cultural skills, and understanding of other cultures.

In Place, Vergot, Dragon, and Hightower’s (2008) research, international involvement was crucial for increasing global knowledge and understanding, and positive behavior and attitude changes. People who have international learning experiences can contribute to their personal and professional development. In Bruening and Frick’s (2004) research, international courses stimulated students to learn how to solve problems via practical experience. Students who have international education experiences are motivated to learn more languages. Also, through the international

experience, they can gain unique perspectives and insights that local-based classes cannot offer. Moreover, international experiences helped students to realize that their previous perceptions and understanding of involvement in international experiences were narrow. In Bruening and Shao's (2005) study, the experts believed that study abroad was one type of experience that enhanced learning far beyond the traditional lecture methods that tend to dominate delivery techniques used in higher education.

Shirley (2006) found several significant differences existed in the perceptions of study abroad when compared by gender. Females were more likely to believe parents had a positive influence in their decision to study abroad than did males. Also, females were more concerned with the cost of studying abroad as a potential barrier in the decision to study abroad than were males. Males were more likely to think that studying abroad significantly delayed the date of graduation than did females. However, there was no significant difference between students with different majors and students' interest and knowledge of international agriculture (Brooks et al., 2006; Mason, Eskridge, Kliewer, Bonifas, Deprez, & Pallas, 1994).

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study was to determine if differences existed in students' perceptions of international educational experiences when compared by selected factors.

Specific objectives were to:

1. Ascertain students' concerns about gaining international educational experiences;
2. Determine students' information sources for learning about study abroad; and

3. Examine difference existed in students' perceptions of selected factors/barriers to international educational experiences when compared by demographic variables.

Methods

The research used descriptive statistics 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 of these groups were surveyed at approximately the same point in time (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009).

The population of interest ($N = 431$) included selected college students enrolled in ANSC 107-General Animal Science, in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at Texas A&M University ($N = 305$) and a similar undergraduate course ANSC 107-Introduction to Animal Science, in the College of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences at Tarleton State University ($N = 126$). These introductory courses provide basic knowledge about the importance of livestock and meat industries; scientific animal agriculture; selection, reproduction, nutrition, management, and marketing of cattle; evaluation and processing of meat, wool, and mohair. The population ($N = 431$) included students from a variety of majors (e.g., Animal Science, Biology, Agricultural Education, etc.) and classifications (e.g., freshman, sophomore, etc.).

Sample size ($N = 153$) was calculated on the basis of the sampling size formula by Dillman, Smyth, and Christian (2009). The researcher used an 80/20 split with a 5% sampling error at a 95% confidence level (Dillman et al.). The 80/20 split was chosen due to the variance in the population with respect to the subject of interest. All

classifications — freshman, sophomore, junior, and senior — of male and female students, were the target audience. Stratified random sampling is a process in which subgroups are selected for the sample in the same proportion as they are present in population, which increases the likelihood of representativeness (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009). The subgroups were students in the colleges of agriculture at Texas A&M University ($n = 116$) and Tarleton State University ($n = 37$). These samples were reduced by errant e-mail addresses (four addresses were invalid) and students' rights to opt out of the research ($n = 2$); 98 students (27 from Tarleton State and 71 from Texas A&M) provided useable responses to the survey. The response rate was 67%. The small size of this sample is recognized as a limitation of the study; caution is advised in generalizing these results to other populations.

To control for non-response error, the researcher used non-parametric tests (Independent Samples Mann-Whitney U Test) to compare early to late respondents on one question (students' preferences for acquiring international education experiences). No differences existed between early and late respondents (Lindner, Murphy, & Briers, 2001). Therefore, the findings may be generalized to the target population ($N = 431$).

The research instrument was developed based on three earlier student questionnaires. "The original instrument was an online questionnaire used to determine attributes of European Union students" (Plompen & Myrrell, 2006; as cited in Briers et al., 2010, p. 7). Later, the instrument was altered to a paper copy questionnaire to survey students at Armenian State Agrarian University (Briers et al., 2010; Shinn et al., 2008, 2009). The third iteration was used to examine students in College of Agriculture and

Life Sciences at Texas A&M University (Briers et al., 2010). Thus, the instrument applied in this study was the fourth adaptation, in which editorial changes to the Briers' et al. (2010) instrument were made to be more representative of all colleges of agriculture, not just for Texas A&M University.

The instrument included items to measure students' ratings of concerns about gaining international educational experiences, their information sources of learning about study abroad, and how often they contacted these sources.

Students' concerns about gaining international educational experiences were measured using a scale that ranged from 1 (not important) to 4 (very important), on the importance of 14 concerns that may have influenced their decisions about study abroad programs. Selected examples of these factors included *the country itself*, *the language spoken in the country and/or the university*, and *affordability*. Also, respondents were asked to rank-order the top three concerns with 1 being the top concern about gaining international educational experiences.

Students' information sources for learning about international educational experiences were measured using a scale that ranged from 1 (infrequently) to 3 (frequently), on the frequency of 6 information sources that may have influenced their perceptions of international educational experiences. Selected examples of information sources included *friends*, *faculty members*, and *academic advisors*. Students rated each of fourteen information sources using a scale that ranged from 1 (infrequently) to 3 (frequently).

Students' demographic information (gender, ethnicity, language, finance of studies, and GPA) was collected with the survey instrument.

Data were collected with an online questionnaire. A personalized e-mail was sent to students two days before the survey to notify them. Follow-up reminders were sent to non-respondents every three days after the initial distribution for approximately ten days. Participants' names and e-mail addresses remained confidential.

Data were automatically coded in a database for statistical analysis. The analysis used the SPSS statistical software package. Calculations were of frequencies, means, standard deviations, *t*-test, and Chi-square test.

Results

Participants ($N = 98$) included 27 from Tarleton State University and 71 from Texas A&M University; 23 males and 68 females (Table 3.1). There were 71 Caucasians, 19 Hispanics, and 3 other ethnicities. Approximately 87% of respondents were working toward a Bachelor of Science degree. There were 54 respondents who indicated that they spoke English only, while 30 respondents spoke English and Spanish. Only 3% had satisfying international educational experience while 89% had no international educational experiences (Table 3.1).

Table 3.1

Demographics of Student Respondents (N = 98)

Variables	Categories	<i>f</i> ^a	%
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, satisfying	3	3.1
	Yes, but not satisfying	1	1.0
How are you financing your current studies?	Family financial assistance	57	58.2
	Student loans	35	35.7
	Partial scholarship	32	32.7
	Savings from the previous work	29	29.6
	Part-time job	22	22.4
	Pay full tuition and fees personally	20	20.4
	Private loans	8	8.2
	Full scholarship	7	7.1

Note. ^aFrequencies may not total 98 because of missing data.

Objective One: Ascertain students' concerns about gaining international educational experiences

Students were asked to rate the importance of 14 factors that may have concerned them while making choices about specific 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 & Myrrell, 2006; Shinn et al., 2008) (Table 3.2).

Affordability ($M = 3.70$, $SD = .62$) was the only concern rated as very important ($M = 3.51$ - 4.00) when considering gaining international educational experiences. Respondents also thought *the country* ($M = 3.45$, $SD = .65$) and *available information about the country, university, and program* ($M = 3.45$, $SD = .75$) were important concerns. *Having friends and family in the area or region* ($M = 2.02$, $SD = 1.02$) and *having friends who study at that university (for study in foreign universities)* ($M = 2.28$, $SD = 1.01$) were the least concerning factors and were rated as somewhat important by the respondents (Table 3.2).

Table 3.2

Students' Ratings of Selected Concerns about Gaining International Educational Experience (n = 47)

Concerns	Not	Somewhat	Important	Very	<i>M^a</i>	<i>SD</i>
	important	important		important		
	<i>f</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>f</i>		
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.

^a Four-point Likert-type scale: 1 (Not important) to 4 (Very important).

Table 3.3

Students' Rankings of the Top Three Concerns about Gaining International Educational Experiences (n = 47)

Concerns	Ranking Frequencies			Sum	Overall Rank ^a
	1 st	2 nd	3 rd		
Affordability	14	6	6	60	1
The country itself	8	7	4	42	2
The subject matter specialty of the program	4	6	3	27	3
The language spoken in the country and/or the university	4	4	3	23	4
Having friends accompany me on the study abroad (for U.S. study abroad programs)	2	3	5	17	5
For university programs, the reputation of the specific program	1	4	5	16	6
Accessibility to and from the U.S.	2	2	5	15	7
Cultural attractions in the area	1	4	3	14	8
Having friends who study at that university (for study in foreign universities)	2	1	3	11	9
For U.S study abroad programs, the reputation of the university organizing the study abroad program	2	1	3	11	9
Information available about the country, university, and program	1	2	4	11	9
For study in foreign universities, the reputation of the foreign university	1	2	2	9	12
Weather conditions/climate	2	-	-	6	13
Having friends and family in the area or region	1	-	-	3	14

Note. ^a Overall rank was determined by weighting rank scores in reverse order; 1st place rank scores received three points each, while 3rd place rank scores received one point each. Individual weighted scores for each factor were summed to derive the overall rank.

Respondents ranked the top three concerns, with 1 being the top concern, that may have limited them from acquiring international educational experiences (Table 3.3). *Affordability* ($\Sigma = 60$), *the country itself* ($\Sigma = 42$), and *the subject matter specialty of the program* ($\Sigma = 27$) were ranked as the top concerns. Students' ratings and rankings of factors that concerned them about gaining international educational experiences shows almost the same results. They cared about *affordability*, *the country itself*, *the subject*

matter specialty of the program, and the language spoken in the country and/or the university. Respondents ranked *having friends and family in the area or region* ($\Sigma = 3$), *Weather conditions/climate* ($\Sigma = 6$), and *for study in foreign universities, the reputation of the foreign university* ($\Sigma = 6$) as the three least concerning factors about gaining international educational experiences (Table 3.3).

Objective Two: Determine students' information sources of learning about study abroad

Respondents were asked to rate the frequencies of motivational and prohibitive information sources for learning about study abroad, using a scale that ranged from “infrequently” to “frequently.” Six information sources for learning about international educational experiences were drawn from previous research (Briers et al., 2010; Plompen & Myrrell, 2006; Shinn et al., 2008) (Table 3.4 and Table 3.5).

The motivational information sources for learning about study abroad included *study abroad staff* ($M = 2.16$, $SD = .77$), *class* ($M = 2.08$, $SD = .68$), and *friends* ($M = 2.02$, $SD = .76$), and as students' top “most frequently used” information sources (Table 3.4).

Table 3.4

Students' Information Sources and Frequencies of Use When Considering Motivating Factors for Learning about Study Abroad (n = 44)

Sources	f^a			M^b	SD
	Infrequently	Sometimes	Frequently		
Study abroad staff	7	13	12	2.16	.77
Class	7	20	10	2.08	.68
Friends	12	19	13	2.02	.76
Faculty members	7	20	7	2.00	.65
Academic advisers	10	12	8	1.93	.79

Table 3.4

Students' Information Sources and Frequencies of Use When Considering Motivating Factors for Learning about Study Abroad (n = 44)

Sources	f^a			M^b	SD
	Infrequently	Sometimes	Frequently		
Study abroad staff	7	13	12	2.16	.77
Class	7	20	10	2.08	.68
Friends	12	19	13	2.02	.76
Faculty members	7	20	7	2.00	.65
Academic advisers	10	12	8	1.93	.79
Family members	12	6	7	1.80	.87

Note. ^aFrequencies are shown how many students chose each information sources. Frequencies may not total 44 because of missing data. ^b Scale: 1 (Infrequently) to 3 (Frequently).

Respondents rated discouraging or prohibitive sources of information when considering challenges to learning about study abroad as *study abroad staff* ($M = 2.00$, $SD = .74$), *classes* ($M = 2.00$, $SD = .68$), and *faculty members* ($M = 2.00$, $SD = .62$) (Table 3.5).

Table 3.5

Students' Information Sources and Frequencies of Use When Considering Challenges to Learning about Study Abroad (n = 31)

Sources	f^a			M^b	SD
	Infrequently	Sometimes	Frequently		
Study abroad staff	8	14	8	2.00	.74
Class	7	17	7	2.00	.68
Faculty members	4	14	4	2.00	.62
Friends	5	22	3	1.93	.52
Academic advisers	9	11	6	1.88	.76
Family members	7	7	4	1.83	.79

Note. ^aFrequencies are shown how many students chose each information sources. Frequencies may not total 31 because of missing data. ^b Scale: 1 (Infrequently) to 3 (Frequently).

Objective Three: Examine differences in students' perceptions of selected factors/barriers to international educational experiences when compared by demographic variables.

Respondents considered the benefit of participating in international educational experiences as being more competitive in the global market. In Objective Three, the researcher examined if differences existed in students' perceptions and interests of gaining international educational experience when compared by demographic variables. When compared by the gender, no significant ($p > .05$) difference existed between males' and females' perceptions about their current degree improving their competitiveness in the global marketplace. Also, no significant differences ($p > .05$) existed between their interests of gaining international educational experiences and their perceptions that participating in study abroad programs would improve their competitiveness in the global marketplace when compared by gender (Table 3.6).

Table 3.6

Differences in Students' Perceptions of International Educational Experiences When Compared by Gender (N = 98)

Perceptions of International Educational Experiences		<i>f</i>		Cramer's V
		Male	Female	
Do you believe your current degree will improve your competitiveness in the global marketplace?	Yes	18	37	.23
	Unsure	4	29	
	No	1	2	
Do you believe that participating in study abroad programs would improve your competitiveness in the global market?	Yes	15	46	.04
	Unsure	7	20	
	No	1	2	
Would you consider studying abroad?	Yes	17	52	.03
	No	6	16	

Note. Frequencies may not total 98 because of missing data.

In this sample, the researcher collected data from two universities. When compared by universities, the results may reflect differences caused by different support of and sources for students to consider gaining international educational experiences. Thus, the researcher examined if significant differences existed in students' interests and perceptions of gaining international educational experiences when compared by university. There was no difference between students from Tarleton State University and students from Texas A&M University in the belief that their current degree would improve their competitiveness in the global marketplace (Table 3.7).

There was a statistically significant difference between students from different universities in their perceptions to study abroad. Students from Texas A&M University were more willing to study abroad than students from Tarleton State University. Also, students from Texas A&M University held more positive attitudes that participating in

study abroad programs would improve their competitiveness in the global marketplace than did students from Tarleton State University (Table 3.7).

Table 3.7

Differences in Students' Perceptions of International Educational Experiences When Compared By University (N = 98)

Perceptions of International Educational Experiences		<i>f</i>		Cramer's V
		TSU	TAMU	
Do you believe your current degree will improve your competitiveness in the global marketplace?	Yes	12	43	.06
	Unsure	7	28	
	No	1	2	
Do you believe that participating in study abroad programs would improve your competitiveness in the global market?	Yes	9	52	.27*
	Unsure	9	20	
	No	2	1	
Would you consider studying abroad?	Yes	11	64	.26*
	No	9	14	

Note. Frequencies may not total 98 because of missing data. * $p < .05$.

When compared by the respondents who were bi-lingual and respondents who only spoke English, no significant difference existed between bi-lingual speakers' and English-only speaker' perceptions about their current degree improving their competitiveness in the global marketplace. Also, no significant differences existed between their interests of gaining international educational experiences and their perceptions that participating in study abroad programs would improve their competitiveness in the global marketplace when compared by bi-lingual speakers' and English-only speaker.

No significant differences existed between students' perceptions of international educational experiences when compared by self-reported grade point average.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The result shows that only 4% of respondents have participated in study abroad programs. This is congruent with the findings of Moore et al. (2011). Affordability was rated very important by respondents. This finding is similar to the results of Briers et al. (2010) and Andreasen (2003). The financial concern was the most challenging factor that students rated. The result matches the finding of Texas A&M University (2010) that the main reason for not studying abroad is that respondents felt international experience was expensive. Respondents also thought the country and available information of the country, university and program were important concerns. The findings were congruent with the finding of Wingenbach et al. (2006) that students consider lack of cultural knowledge and fear of unknown as barriers of gaining international educational experiences. University could provide the available information about the country, university, and program to alleviate students' concerns.

Students rated study abroad staff, class, and friends as top "most frequently used" motivational information sources for learning about study abroad. In addition, they rated study abroad staff, class, and faculty members as top "most frequently used" discouraging information sources for learning about study abroad. The findings show that study abroad staff and class provided both positive and negative information to students. This finding can be connected to the finding of Bruening and Shao (2005) that faculty who had international biases would give students limited support for studying abroad. Since faculty members were the top information source for learning about study

abroad, faculty should try to keep a neutral or positive attitude in class to encourage students to gain international educational experiences.

No significant difference between males' and females' perceptions about their current degree improving their competitiveness in the global marketplace. Also, no significant differences existed between their interests of gaining international educational experiences and their perceptions that participating in study abroad programs would improve their competitiveness in the global marketplace when compared by gender. However, the male respondents were few ($n = 23$), which may cause a statistical bias. Further research may be expanded and conducted to see if the significant differences existed between their concerns of gaining international educational experiences when compared by gender.

When compared by universities, there was no significant difference between students from Tarleton State University and students from Texas A&M University in the belief that their current degree would improve their competitiveness in the global marketplace. There was a moderate and statistically significant difference between students from different universities in their perceptions to study abroad. Students from Texas A&M University were more willing to study abroad than students from Tarleton State University. Also, students from Texas A&M University held more positive attitudes that participating in study abroad programs would improve their competitiveness in the global marketplace than did students from Tarleton State University. The finding shows that Texas A&M University might have better support and sources for students to consider gaining international educational experiences than

Tarleton State University. However, the sample from Tarleton State University is small ($n = 20$). It may cause statistical bias. Further research should collect more data to avoid the bias.

This research should be expanded and continued to measure students' concerns of gaining international educational experiences. Gathering a larger sample of respondents will benefit further research by allowing researchers to gather more information about respondents. Further research may be conducted with respondents from several universities in Texas to determine the students' general perspectives of gaining international educational experiences.

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

“Study abroad program helps facilitate academic programs, volunteer positions, conducting research, internships and exchange programs around the world” (Texas A&M University, 2009). The results of this study showed that about 77% of the respondents were interested in gaining international educational experiences. Students believed that gaining international educational experiences helped them enrich their overall life experience, seek opportunities to live in another country or culture, and helped their résumé. The results are congruent with the findings of Briers et al. (2010). Respondents in this study concerned about financial issues. They reported that paying for the program or funding their living expenses and studies during the study abroad and finding affordable and adequate housing as the most challenging factors. The result matches the finding of Texas A&M University (2010) that the main reason for not studying abroad is that respondents felt international experience was expensive.

Research Implications and Recommendations

Only 4% of the respondents had participated in study abroad programs. The rate is low and may be explained that a majority of the respondents were undergraduates and their funding of current degrees was mainly from family financial assistance and student loans. In addition, respondents were enrolled in ANSC 107 at Texas A&M University and a similar undergraduate course (ANSC 107) at Tarleton State University. These are introductory courses. Students may not have been enrolled in courses with more international perspectives of agriculture. Further research should be conducted to see if

students enrolled in international agriculture-related courses have advanced perspectives about gaining international educational experiences.

In addition, graduate respondents in this study were only 6%. Their voice may easily be covered by the undergraduate students. Further research may focus on graduate students to see if they have different interests and perceptions of gaining international educational experiences.

Further research may focus on students who have had international educational experience to see their perspectives of international experience. It may help researcher to understand how the practical experience influenced students about their global perspectives. In addition, friend was rated as motivational information sources for students learning about international educational experiences. Further research may be conducted on students with international educational experiences to see how they can influence other students who have no international educational experiences.

Students from Texas A&M University were more willing to study abroad than students from Tarleton State University. Also, students from Texas A&M University held more positive attitudes that participating in study abroad programs would improve their competitiveness in the global marketplace than did students from Tarleton State University. The finding may show that Texas A&M University might provide better support and sources for students to consider gaining international educational experiences than Tarleton State University. However, the sample from Tarleton State University is small ($n = 20$). It may cause the statistical bias. Further research should collect more data from each university to avoid the bias.

In this study, about 73% of the respondents were Caucasian. Hispanic was about 19%. Other races included African American, Chinese, and so on were only 3%. Further research may be expanded to have larger sample then to find the differences in students' perceptions of international educational experiences when compared by the ethnicity. In addition, respondents rated language as a barrier for study abroad participation. Further research may be conducted to see the relationship between students' language ability and their interests of gaining international educational experience.

Practical Implications and Recommendations

The university has a responsibility to encourage experience which helps students prepare for global leadership (Glanville, 2006). For the university, since students preferred to register for study abroad programs held by their universities, when designing study abroad programs, universities may consider constructing university faculty-led study abroad programs, university study abroad courses as internships, and register for university courses at a university study center to attract students to join. In addition, students ranked paperwork required for studying in another country and transferring courses credits as two top challenging factors. Thus, the university should provide more administrative support for students who are interested in gaining international educational experiences and simplify the application process. Students rated financial constrain as the most challenging factors. The university should provide scholarships for study abroad and the available information about the country, university, and program to alleviate students' concerns. This is consistent with the finding of Irani et al. (2006) that the less that student sensed potential barriers to the participation existed,

the more likely they were to express their intent to participate in international involvement.

With the state budget reduction every year, university may find alternative ways to improve students' global awareness rather than sending all students to other countries. University may recruit more international faculty and enroll more international students. International faculty and students may provide various ideas to and share international experiences with American students. It stimulates native students to think about internationalization. The short-term exchange programs may be another alternative method to provide opportunities of international educational experience to students.

Faculty members and advisors are the main information sources for students learning about international educational experiences. Thus, faculty could inform students about the benefits of gaining international educational experiences and encourage them to pursue such experiences. When designing the curriculum for international agriculture, faculty members could use technologies such as internet and website to present the real work in other countries. It helps students build their global conceptions and perspectives. This is supported by finding of Irani et al. (2006) that the greater degree to which agricultural students recognized the importance of international involvement, the more likely it was that they intended to participate in international programs and activities while in college.

About 77% of the respondents were interested in gaining international educational experiences. Students held a positive attitude toward study abroad. Thus, students should not act passively toward internationalization. Since university and

faculty provide the sources and methods of internationalization, students should use these sources well to prepare their global competitiveness. To know the international situation, students should read and absorb more international information by themselves. In addition, participation is a good action for students to practice. They can join the study abroad programs or involve in related student activities to interact with international people. It is supported by Zhai and Scheer (2004) that contacting with international people had a positive relationship with global perspectives and attitudes.

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APPENDIX

Block 1

Your views are important to our understanding about study abroad opportunities. Thank you in advance for your participation.

Directions: Please answer the following questions to help us better understand your educational goals and preferences. **Check** the desired choice for your answer and/or write in the spaces provided when necessary. Some questions are limited to **one response** while others allow **all responses** that apply.

Default Question Block

Where are you currently enrolled as a student?

- Tarleton State University
 Texas A&M University

What is your academic major? (Please specify in the following text box)

Prior to your graduation in your current degree, would you like to study a semester or more at another U.S. university?

- Yes
 No

Other than your current university, in which specific U.S. university or universities would you most like to study? List up to four U.S. universities in order of your preference, with **#1** being most preferred and **#4** being the least preferred.

#1 University Choice
 #2 University Choice
 #3 University Choice
 #4 University Choice

When considering an international education experience, rank (**1=Most** to **6=Least**) your preferences of the following options: (Rank only those that you would seriously consider doing!)

Register for a university faculty-led study abroad spending 1 to 10 weeks abroad

- Register for university courses at a university Study Center (e. g., Costa Rica,etc.)
- Register for a university study abroad course or program as an internship, directed study, research project, or similar international experience
- Register for courses from a study abroad program from another U.S. university, with transfer credits back to your university
- Register for courses at a foreign university, with transfer credits back to your university
- Register for a program at a foreign university and complete the degree from that university
- No, I do not** want to study abroad (enter **1** to skip this question)

In which specific country or countries would you most like to study abroad? List up to four countries, in order of your preference, with **#1** being most preferred and **#4** being the least preferred.

#1 Country Choice

#2 Country Choice

#3 Country Choice

#4 Country Choice

How much do the following factors motivate you to study abroad? **Directions:** Choose **one level** of motivation for **each factor** listed; then rank the **Top Three (1-2-3) Factors** that motivate you the most for study abroad.

	Motivation Levels				Factors
	Does Not Motivate	Motivates a Little	Motivates	Motivates a Lot	Rank Top 3
Increased employability	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="text"/>
Opportunity to work in another country after completing current degree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="text"/>
Learn another language	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="text"/>
Opportunity to live in another country or culture	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="text"/>
Important stage in my personal development	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="text"/>
Overall life experience	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="text"/>
Learn more about my academic specialization	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="text"/>
Get a graduate degree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="text"/>

Looks good on a résumé	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="text"/>
Importance placed by academic advisor/department	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="text"/>
If other, please describe: <input type="text"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="text"/>

Considering the motivating factors listed in the previous question, what information sources do you use to learn about study abroad at your university, and how often do you come in contact with those sources?

	Sources (Select all that Apply)	Frequency		
		Infrequently	Sometimes	Frequently
Friends	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Faculty Members	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Academic Advisers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Study Abroad Staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Class	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Family members	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other, please describe <input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

If you were considering study abroad, how important are the following factors when making choices about specific study programs or foreign universities?

Directions: Choose **one level** of importance for **each factor** listed; then rank the **Top Three** (1-2-3) **Factors** that are most important to your decision making process.

	Importance Levels				Factors Rank Top 3
	Not important	Somewhat Important	Important	Very Important	
The country itself	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="text"/>
The language spoken in the country and/or the university	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="text"/>
For U.S study abroad programs, the reputation of the university organizing the study abroad program	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="text"/>
For study in foreign universities, the reputation of the foreign university	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="text"/>
For university programs, the					

reputation of the specific program	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The subject matter specialty of the program	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Having friends accompany me on the study abroad (for U.S. study abroad programs)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Having friends who study at that university (for study in foreign universities)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Having friends and family in the area or region	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Information available about the country, university, and program	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Accessibility to and from the U.S.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Affordability	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cultural attractions in the area	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Weather conditions/climate	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other, please explain: <input type="text"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

How challenging (difficult) do you think the following would be when preparing to study abroad or while studying abroad? **Directions:** Choose **one level** of difficulty for **each challenge** to studying abroad; then rank the **Top Three** (1-2-3) **Challenges** that might **prevent** you from study abroad.

	Difficulty Levels				Challenges Rank Top 3
	Not Difficult	A Little Difficult	Difficult	Very Difficult	
Language barriers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gaining admission or being accepted where I want to study	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Being allowed to study abroad by my major	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Paperwork required for studying in another country	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Transferring course credits	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Time required making preparations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Graduation on time	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
It is stressful to prepare, organize,	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

and implement					
Paying for the program or funding my living expenses and studies during the study abroad	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="text"/>
Finding affordable and adequate housing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="text"/>
Other financial constraints	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="text"/>
My family situation makes it difficult for me to consider the opportunity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="text"/>
It would be difficult for me to leave the U.S. and my family for a long time	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="text"/>
I may lose opportunities in the U.S. if I leave for a long time	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="text"/>
Other, please explain: <input type="text"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="text"/>

Considering the challenges listed in the previous question, what information sources at your university do you use to learn about study abroad, and how often do you come in contact with those sources?

	Sources	Frequency		
	Select All That Apply	Infrequently	Sometimes	Frequently
Friends	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Faculty Members	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Academic Advisers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Study Abroad Staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Class	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Family members	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other, please describe <input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

When selecting a foreign university in which to apply, which of the following rankings or reports are important to you? (Choose **all** that apply)

- International press reports or rankings, (e.g., QS World Universities, Shanghai Jiao Tong University, etc.)
- U.S. press reports or rankings (e.g., U.S. News & World Report, Newsweek, etc.)
- I am not aware of reports or rankings
- I have no interest in reports or rankings

What are your immediate plans upon completing your current degree program?
(Choose **all** that apply)

- Study for an advanced degree in the United States
- Study for an advanced degree in another country
- Do further studies (but not an advanced degree)
- Start work in the U.S. without considering further studies
- Start work and consider an advanced degree in the future
- Look for work in another country
- Travel
- Enter military service without considering further studies
- Going home for a while
- Do not know at this time
- Other, please list:

Do you believe your current degree will improve your competitiveness in the global marketplace?

- Yes
- Neutral, unsure
- No

Do you believe participating in a study abroad program would improve your competitiveness in the global marketplace?

- Yes
- Neutral, unsure
- No

What would you recommend to improve the global perspectives of your current degree program? (Please describe in the following text box)

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION: Please tell us about yourself.

What is your gender?

- Male
 Female

Please enter your hometown zip code in the following text box.

What is your ethnicity? (Choose all that apply)

- African American or Black
 American Indian or Alaska Native
 Asian
 Hispanic/Latino
 Caucasian or White
 Other, please describe:

In what year were you born? 19____

In addition to English, what other language(s) can you speak, at least conversationally? (Choose **all** that apply)

- None, just English
 Arabic
 French
 Portuguese
 Spanish
 Others, please specify:

For how many years have you lived outside the State of Texas? _____year(s)

For how many years have you lived outside the United States? _____year(s)

Have you participated in any study abroad program?

- Yes, and it was very satisfying
- Yes, and it was OK
- Yes, but it was not satisfying
- No, I've never participated in any study abroad program

Toward what degree are you presently working?

- Bachelor's degree
- Master's degree- non-thesis
- Master's degree-thesis
- Ph.D. degree
- Professional doctorate (e.g., Ed.D. or D. Eng.)
- Professional degree (e.g., DVM, MD, DDS, JD)
- Other degree, please specify:

In what year of study are you?

- First year
- Second year
- Third year
- Fourth year
- Fifth year
- Other year of study (please specify year):

Do you plan to pursue an advanced degree? (Choose **all that apply)**

- Yes, and change subject area specialty from my current major
- Yes, and change universities
- Yes, and change states
- Yes, and change countries
- No, I don't plan to pursue an advanced degree

How are you presently financing your studies? (Choose **all items that apply)**

- I have a full scholarship
- I have a partial scholarship
- I pay full tuition and fees
- I have some financial assistance from family
- I work part-time to pay for my educational expenses
- I use savings from previous work
- I borrow money through (federal/) student loans
- I borrow money through non- government/private loans
- Other, please specify:

What is your cumulative grade point average?

- 4.00
- 3.99-3.50
- 3.49-3.00
- 2.99-2.50
- 2.49-2.00
- Less than 2.00

Do you have any additional comments about study abroad programs? If so, please describe them in the following text box.

VITA

Chia-Wei received a Bachelor of Arts degree in advertising and public relations from Fu-Jen Catholic University in Taiwan in June 2004. She was commended with the President's Scholarship Award from her university. In addition, she carried out the duties of the president of the Student Association during her sophomore year. She gained valuable leadership experience by organizing events and managing student issues.

Her career experience began in her junior year after winning the outstanding speaker honor in her university's PR Management course. Amazed with her performance in class, the visiting lecturer from Elite Public Relations Consultants (EPR) – the largest PR agency based in Greater China – offered her an internship at his company. As a result of her outstanding performance as an intern, she was invited to join the health care team of EPR as an account executive after graduation. After working a year at the prestigious agency, she went back to help her family's orange orchard business with organizing marketing events and managing customer relations.

She entered the Department of Agricultural Leadership, Education, and Communications at Texas A&M University in 2009 and received her Master of Science degree in August 2011. She may be contacted at: 600 John Kimbrough Boulevard, College Station, Texas 77843-2116.