Revisiting the literature on study abroad participation in adult and higher education: Moving beyond two decades and two percent

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The purpose of this literature review is to critically examine over two decades of research concerned with study abroad participation in the United States. Research questions framing the investigation are: 1) What methodological shortcomings can be identified in assessing influences on study abroad participation for adult and higher education learners in the last 20 years of research? and 2) What tentative solutions can be offered to encourage study abroad participation for adult and higher education learners in the US and globally? To answer the research questions, seminal and key studies contributing to understanding study abroad participation are synthesized to deduce what is needed and important to increase participation rates in study abroad programs for adults in higher education. Tentative solutions and conclusions are made with special attention to perceptions of and motivations to participate in study abroad programs. These suggestions seek to carve new paths and understanding in factors influencing study abroad participation.

Keywords: study abroad, participation; motivation to study abroad; international education; intent to study abroad; perceptions of study abroad; barriers and influences to study abroad.

INTRODUCTION

Academic institutions across the world recognize that the workplace is more dynamic and global than ever before. Sison and Brennan (2012) note, "universities globally are increasingly seeking to improve the international mobility of their students" (p. 167). The most recent Institute of International Education's (IIE) 2013 *Open Doors* report reveals that there has been a national average increase of US students participating in study abroad programs from 2 percent to 3 precent of outgoing American students, and a 40 percent increase in international students studying in the US this decade. The question is why the increase in US students studying abroad is slight while numbers of incoming international students is rising. Sison and Brennan (2012) indicate that the disparity between incoming/outgoing students is not unique to the US, but is also experienced in Australia. US and Australian universities, like other institutions of higher education around the world, showcase globalization and other international institutional initiatives as central themes in their missions, values, and goals (Simon & Brennan, 2012). These institutions self-identify as leaders at the forefront of global education. However, both Australia and the US have yet to send even ten percent of the total adult and higher education (AHE) learner population abroad in one academic year (Simon & Brennan, 2012, p. 167). Hackney et al. (2013) notes that available scholarship about participation in study abroad has historically been limited to the US context as either a destination or as a point of departure. However, the increased presence of developing nations in higher education, as well as growth of higher education in general, creates a need to understand why most students never choose to participate in study abroad (Hackney et al., 2013).

Scholars concerned with study abroad participation agree that the choice to go abroad is influenced by a variety of situational and individual factors. The last two decades of research show a complex spectrum of individual student (personal-based) and institutional-based factors as the greatest influences on participation in international education/study abroad (Brux & Fry, 2010; Carter, 1991; Dessoff, 2006; Dolby, 2004; Hackney, Boggs, Kathawala, & Hayes, 2013;Hembroff & Rusz, 1993; Institute of International Education, 2013; Lincoln Commission, 2005; NAFSA 2004; Salisbury, Umbach, & Paulsen, 2009). Even so, apart from revealing the complexity, the research has not developed a framework that can be used to encourage greater study abroad participation.

The study reported on in this article uses the abundance of US studies and aims to develop a theoretical model that describes the problems and issues confronting study abroad participation, and enables the formulation of new directions for the future of AHE.

Thus, the research questions guiding this literature review asks:

1) What methodological shortcomings can be identified in assessing influences on study abroad participation for adult and higher education learners in the last 20 years of research?
2) What tentative solutions can be offered to encourage study abroad participation by adult and higher education learners in the US and globally?

METHODOLOGY

To answer the research questions, literature was collected from a wide range of sources including: dissertations/theses; government and non-government agency reports; institutional reports/publication; journal articles; books and book chapters; conference papers; and not for profit publications. Database searches focused on publications from 1991-2011. The literature was analysed using a narrative, or traditional, approach to reveal the evolution of understanding (Bem, 1995) on the topic of AHE participation in study abroad programs. In this approach, the emphasis is not on examining an exhaustive list of research on the topic but more examining seminal or major research pieces that build on each other over time (Baumeister & Leary, 1997).

Baumeister and Leary (1997) suggest literature review research, while not operational in a traditional sense of participant data collection, functions within and across disciplines as bridges between "the vast and scattered assortment of articles on a topic" (p. 311). In this type of research, data is collected from existing discourse inviting relevant insight on the topic. Further, literature reviews can serve a specific purpose in revealing "problems, weaknesses, contradictions, or controversies in a particular area of investigation" with attention to broad or specific research questions that may or may not offer "tentative solutions to the problems" (Baumeister & Leary, 1997, p. 312).

To identify the major methodological issues concerning study abroad participation, approaches and assumptions related to the problem of low participation need to be identified. To do so, the researcher, first, offers a chronological review of the literature concerned with study abroad participation and identifies incongruences among the findings, and questions yet to be answered by the current state of research concerned with study abroad participation.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Educators, legislators, and higher education institutions have long recognized benefits and the positive impact of participation in study abroad programs. Study abroad can "help students develop practical skills that complement classroom learning, improve problem solving, analytical skills, tolerance for ambiguity, and cross-cultural competence" (NAFSA, 2004, p. 17). AHE learners around the world

become more employable (Teichler & Janson, 2007); have a better sense of self and identity (Dolby, 2004); enhance career development/advancement (Norris & Gillespie, 2008); and transform their perspectives/worldviews (Sanders & Morgan, 2001) through participation in study abroad programs. But, alas, participation rates still flounder.

Findings from that research are presented and organized under the following headers: initial studies; other approaches following/informed by initial studies; and current relevant literature. This section concludes with a summary of deductions from the collection of research concerned with study abroad participation to connect previous understandings to new paths of inquiry. To identify possible solutions to encourage study abroad participation, novel paths of inquiry are used, examining literature that reframes the question and focusing on new, sparsely explored directions, such as perceptions of and motivations to study abroad for AHE learners.

Initial studies

Early research efforts asked students from different institutions why they elected not to study abroad. The research aim was to identify predictive variables explaining why some students did not study abroad. Research concerned with study abroad participation in the early 1990's underscored particular qualities present in the "typical" study abroad participant. Resultant profile sketches of the typical student going abroad showed that those who had interest in study abroad were in their first-year, fairly affluent, Caucasian, and female (Carlson, Burn, Useem & Yachimowicz, 1991; Cloughly, 1991). Researchers' early efforts placed emphasis on both pre-departure and post-departure aspects of education abroad in institution-wide evaluations (Carlson & Widaman, 1988; Carlson, Burns, Useem, & Yachimowicz 1991). Mixed method approaches were utilized to study who participates in study abroad and how those individuals differ from those who choose to stay at the home campus; what sorts of differences occurred over time; what individual influences contributed to changes observed; and what the long-term effects were (Carlson et al., 1991, p. 1). Carlson et al's. (1991) study showed that only students who had an interest in global issues typically participated; those not having such interest were not likely to participate in a study abroad course. Students who went abroad also reported significantly different self-rated academic performance than students who did not go abroad. Thus, the researchers concluded that those students who expressed an interest in a number of global issues and a desire for intercultural interactions, as well as students who perceived themselves to be high academic achievers were more likely to go abroad than students who did not exhibit these traits.

Other significant research efforts in this decade stressed the importance of the institution as a key influential factor (Cloughly, 1991). While less than one percent of students enrolled in AHE studied abroad in the early 1990s, some academic intuitions reported having 60 per cent of all students study abroad at some point in their academic journey (Cloughly, 1991). Evaluating responses from students who did not go abroad revealed: a lack of personal interest relating to the experience and/or destination; already having been to the destination; academic limitations; uncertainty concerns regarding safety and language; lack of planning; health and contextually bound limitations, such as missing social activities with friends; and lack of familial support (Cloughly, 1991).

Other researchers in the 1990's identified major demographic trends, which are still reflected in participations rates today. These trends emphasized that low-income minorities and male students were not likely to ever consider studying abroad (Carter, 1991; Cole, 1991). Influences on participation for minority and male AHE learners manifested differently than those for higher-income female counterparts. Carter (1991) and Cole (1991) related conversations about financial considerations, and the idea that study abroad was not a reality for many of the minority students because of lack of awareness, support (institutionally and socially), employment and monetary limitations. Other scholars, such as Hembroff and Rusz (1993, p. 31), suggested low study abroad participation rates among

minorities could be attributed to higher dropout rates for minority students in the junior and senior years of college.

Synthesizing this early research work, it is possible to derive five emergent themes centred on student-based and institutional-based influences.

1. Personal: Interest is one of the key factors. Essentially, if a student bears a personal obstacle related to health (limited mobility) or sees no value, has already been abroad, or has no desire for intercultural interaction they are most likely not to want to participate in study abroad (Albers-Miller, Prenshaw & Straughan, 1999; Carlson & Widaman, 1988; Carlson et al., 1991; Cloughly, 1991).
2. Academic: Educational concerns related to academic major, graduation and perceived achievement plays into interest as well. Study abroad course credit options and available programs across a diversity of majors have been named as one of the primary influences on study abroad participation (Paul & Mukhopadhyay, 1991; Salisbury, Paulsen, & Pascarella, 2009; Schmoll, 2007; Toncar, Reid & Anderson, 2005).
3. Institutional: Additionally, institutional/organizational context, including the university, department, agents with the university, or program, together influence participation in study abroad. Institutions that do not offer study abroad courses, or do not raise awareness about those opportunities (via campus initiatives, department initiatives, or other international program initiatives) influence study abroad participation (Albers-Miller et al., 1999; Kitsantas, 2004; Miller, 2004; Peterson, 2003).
4. Social: Socially bound/constructed perceptions formed through social interactions influence participation in study abroad programs. Students can be influenced by their social networks to study abroad or, conversely not to study abroad because of limited knowledge or exposure from individuals who have studied abroad (Carter, 1991; Chieffo, 2000; Cole, 1991; Jackson, 2005; Nyaupane, Paris, & Teye, 2011).
5. Financial: Perceived and real financial concerns exist for learners, especially minorities and low-income groups (Brux & Fry, 2010; Carter, 1991; Cole, 1991; Hembroff & Rusz, 1993).

These influences can be highly interconnected, and a students' decision to study abroad could be impacted by one or all of these influences. Likely, influences to study abroad participation do not exist in singular absolute states. For example, a student could suggest limited financial mobility influenced his/her decision to not go abroad in addition to not knowing anyone who studied abroad before. This suggests social influences compounded by financial issues could limit a students' access to information about scholarships, funding opportunities, and financial aid to go abroad.

In the early 2000's, researchers continued to utilize mostly quantitative methodologies to examine reasons why some students were going abroad while others were not. However, the research placed more focus on the primary influences in the choice process rather than simply sketching a profile or offering descriptive data about the average student abroad. Chieffo's (2000) researcher-designed questionnaire was administered to 1060 mostly upper-classmen students and sought to identify the spectrum of influences and information participants were accessing to explain what in particular contributed to motivations to participate, or not to participate. Findings yielded from this investigation revealed that less than 30 percent of the sample at a large research university reported to know more than just the fundamental basics about any particular study abroad program (Chieffo, 2000).

Research in the early 2000s drew attention to the academic year as a component influencing an individual's decision to participate in a study abroad course. While entry-level students were likely to express a greater total percentage of interest, it was not until later in the academic career that the individual actually began to actively seek information about a specific study abroad course (Booker,

2001; Cheiffo, 2000). These findings contributed to previous research in the 1990's that suggested motivation changed based on academic performance and academic year (Chieffo, 2000). Scholars noted that motivations to study abroad could remain high regardless of academic year, but were mostly acted upon in the junior and senior year (Booker, 2001; Cheiffo, 2000). Further, Chieffo's (2000) dissertation research highlights that motivation to study abroad could be mediated by peer networks. Friends acted as a resource to find out more and form perceptions about what study abroad has to offer. Students who lacked peer resources or other social networks to provide information about study abroad were unacknowledged by researchers and in scholarship at that time.

Research in the 2000's began to use more individualized approaches to understanding personal constraints by underscoring social and financial issues influencing participation (Booker, 2001). A comparison between groups based on demographic, personal background characteristics, study abroad program preferences, and perceptions of institutional support, as well as perceived outcomes, perceived social influences and perceived obstacles were evaluated (Booker, 2001, p. 57). Again, however, this research served as summative numerical data describing the type of student who most typically goes abroad, quantitatively identifying only their issues and concerns. Collective findings from factor analyses ran parallel with previous efforts sketching a rough profile of the probable type of student most likely to take part in studying abroad: non-minority females of the middle-class (Booker, 2001, p. 57).

Booker's (2001) research emphasized that narratives in social interactions are important for perception-formation encouraging students who have the resources in their social networks to take up the opportunities they have heard about. However, Booker's research fails to explain why male and minority/multicultural students in the US are so dramatically underrepresented in the total number students abroad, and why these students do not consider studying abroad even at the start of their time in higher education. Again, Booker's (2001) work affirmed that fairly affluent, non-Caucasian females are most likely to connect to narratives about study abroad from within their social networks, but his research does not examine male or minority/multicultural students who lack social network support. Additionally, this research did not explain those individuals who do not have peers and other social resources who previously participated in a study abroad course.

Both Chieffo (2000) and Booker (2001) carried out quantitative studies to identify the determinants of student participation in study abroad programs, but they the variables were operationalized differently. In addition, the studies were limited by the types of institutions and populations evaluated. The focused was on students between the ages of 18-23 and recent high school graduates. While Chieffo (2000) noted level of degree completion introduces variation in participation rates because of attrition, there is no follow up to establish differences between the varied AHE learners. Further, research favouring academic level of completion as an influence to participation would focus more on course options, graduation and impending employment opportunities than on drop out and enrolment statistics. Chieffo's research was descriptive. It offered a profile of the student who would typically study abroad, but did not offer insights into why non-Caucasian or male students do not consider studying abroad as an option available to them.

Institutional considerations warrant further explanation as well. As noted by Cloughly (1991), organizational buy-in plays an important role in influencing participation for small liberal arts institutions; however, by sheer volume, big research universities comprise most of the participation numbers (IIE, 2010). While small liberal arts colleges may not comprise the bulk of participation in numbers, there is still a need to examine institutional strategies for communicating messages regarding study abroad and the influence this has on individuals to participate in study abroad programs.

Overall, much of the research during the 1990s failed to operationalize an individualized frame to understand how social, personal, academic, financial, and/or institutional factors interact and manifest in any one student.

Other approaches following/informed by the initial studies

The early 2000's generated new thinking on measuring and evaluating study abroad participation. Large-scale evaluation studies replaced with more individual approaches, looking at how social influences manifested personally for AHE learners (Dolby, 2004; Kitsantas, 2004; Miller, 2004; Peterson, 2003). The resources accessed by students and how these shaped thinking about participation in study abroad were especially important considerations. Peterson (2003) posited both real and perceived barriers could be overcome and remedied by the types of social interactions a student engages in, even when the student perceived it was too costly, or would not fit within a structured degree plan. Research findings from this study were key in uncovering the value that academic and peer social networks provided to students who expressed interest in study abroad but did not initially feel like it was something attainable.

While findings from novel research at this time identified the importance of resources accessed within the social network, inside and outside the institution, it also revealed the importance of institutional social network support. Miller's (2004) research noted that international or domestic travel exposure prior to the study abroad decision as well as ease of access to information through the institution influenced a student to say "yes" to study abroad versus other learning-through-doing opportunities (Miller, 2004). A higher education institution whose faculty and staff encourage, support, and communicate a positive position regarding participation in studying abroad to their students could likely find they serve as a social network resource influencing more information seeking, and more peer to peer sharing.

Not only were peer resources important for providing information and support about study abroad, they also provided ulterior motivation for students who wanted to simply use study abroad to engage socially with friends (Dolby, 2004; Kitsantas, 2004; Opper, Teicher, & Carlson, 1991). Kitsantas' (2004) studies showed that students desire to engage in social interactions and gatherings, to cultivate their own skills in cross-cultural settings, and to develop increased proficiencies and interest in the subject enrolled abroad. The desire to engage socially with other students was an incidental finding in Kitsantas' study, but useful in highlighting a core source of influence shaping perceptions and motivations. In spite of revealing more information about motivations to participate in study abroad programs, the studies by Kitsantas and Opper, et al., were again limited because their samples were predominantly Caucasian and female. A sample that a great deal was already known about.

Kitsantas (2004), Miller (2004), and Peterson (2003) studied the interaction of institutional and peer social network influences, and examined the individual's ability to navigate these influences. Both goals and interests played a part in decision-making concerning study-abroad participation but the studies do not clarify what part the factors played. Both Kitsantas' (2004) and Peterson's (2003) work, employing quantitative measures, warrant further investigation using qualitative methods that can capture a clearer understanding of individual, socio-cultural, perspectives.

Collaboratively, Kitsantas (2004), Miller 2004 and Peterson (2003) identified resources accessed by the student emphasizing social and institutional networks, such as family members and faculty. Studies showed that these influences are at work even before students attend university (Kitsantas, 2004). Studies further found that students access information, form perceptions about what study abroad could mean for them, and negotiate how study abroad could potentially enrich their academic/professional goals within the context of their personal and social lives before going to university and at university

(Kitsantas, 2004; Miller; 2004; Peterson, 2003). Although the studies identified the importance of networks, how students use these networks was not studied (Salisbury, et al., 2010).

Current relevant literature

In 2009, BailyShea (2009) and Salisbury et al. (2010) began to explore dimensions of intent/motivation, and how various social and cultural influences mediate the desire and choice process to study abroad. Other major research efforts were revisiting why participation rates reflected mostly Caucasian females, and excluded minority/multicultural and male AHE learners. The most current research places greater emphasis on gender disparities and what specifically contributes to reasons why more Caucasians and females go abroad than males and minorities (Brux & Fry, 2010; Nguyen, 2014; Simon & Ainsworth, 2012; Stroud, 2010). Brux and Fry (2010) examined how influences manifested across minorities within a more individualized methodological frame using qualitative focus group data collection and survey data. While the sample size was small, 29 responses via survey and 42 participants in various multicultural student organizations, results provided a powerful indication of the real and perceived influences minority students face when thinking about study abroad participation. Financial barriers, academic concerns and fit, family and work obligations, types of programs available, and safety were among the prominent concerns (Brux & Fry, 2010). Similarly, Simon and Ainsworth (2012) found that many African-American students reported disinterest in study abroad, suggesting it was not something widely practiced or encouraged for AHE learners. While influences for participating by minority groups contained some thematic similarities, it is evident from the research that each minority group internalizes obstacles and influences specific to their own lives.

Recent research reveals that interest in study abroad is relatively high across all groups in the university (Salisbury et al., 2010). Connecting early studies to current research on the topic highlights many social considerations. Early research discusses prior travel exposure as a resource of social capital, increasing motivation and likelihood of participation (Miller, 2004). More recent investigations exploring minority/multicultural group perspectives asserts that if minority students believe they will be more welcomed in other countries (more so than they are in the US) they may be interested in study abroad opportunities, even if they do not know an individual within their own social networks who has taken part in study abroad (Brux and Fry, 2010). Essentially, while previous travel exposure influences some Caucasian students, it may not be applicable to all students. Further, research reveals that the idea of living further from home is dependent on the personal predisposition, suggesting, again, a dynamic between personal/individual and social factors of AHE learners' participation in study abroad.

Deductions to encourage participation

Researchers in the past few decades have identified a number of factors to account for low participation rates in study abroad opportunities. However, much of the research does not distinguish between individual and situational (institutional and contextual) influences. Salisbury et al. (2009) highlighted the complexities of disaggregating external (institutional-based) and internal (student-based) influences and the relationship these influences have on the decision to go abroad. In addition, most research on study abroad participation delineate between students who go abroad and students who do not go abroad (Thomas, 2013). Thomas (2013) remark that the historic trend whereby researchers categorize students who go/do not has effectively problematized study abroad for minority/multicultural AHE learners, creating hierarchies between racial groups and lumping all minority interests into one category. Nguyen's (2014) research showed that individual influences manifest uniquely within cultural groups and sub-groups, emphasizing that study abroad participation is not a two-sided coin.

Even research efforts in the last decade that seek to account for individual dispositions place little emphasis on the actual messages and sources of social and cultural capital and the influence those

messages have on perceptions of and motivations to participate in a study abroad course. Further, Salisbury et al. (2011) contend the choice process associated with study abroad is almost identical to the process of deciding where to go to college where "a range of decisions based on affordability, cultural accessibility, intellectual and professional applicability, and curricular viability" are assessed by the individual (Salisbury et al., 2009, p. 123). The core assumptions underpinning Salisbury et al.'s research compare an often four-week or less commitment decision (identified as the most popular duration period for study abroad) to a much longer four-year, or more, commitment and decision.

Comparisons drawn between general college enrolment and study abroad participation, while not completely unwarranted, place a wide lens on what influences participation in study abroad. Using a theoretical understanding about general college enrolment to examine reasons for study abroad participation can make approaches to isolating specific influences to study abroad participation for AHE learners difficult. For example, Salisbury et al's. (2009) positioning of intent to study abroad and enrolment into college as comparatively the same decision-making process is problematic in that it does not draw connections between messages negotiated from cultural and social capital formation and actual participation in study abroad. More importantly, Salisbury et al's. (2009) research neglects a critical perspective accounting for how socio-cultural influences serve to motivate or encourage increased capital to some groups, while serving to deter other groups. Additionally, the comparisons position the research in a perspective based on traditional higher education student entry and neglect some of the more complex issues facing adult learners and populations who do not enter higher education in a traditional fashion.

Desoff (2006) also argues that higher education enrolment and study abroad participation do not model the same decision-making processes and do not encounter the same influences. Desoff (2006) notes that capacity to finance study abroad is not the only issue: "if it were, the percentage of minority students in the study abroad population would match their percentage in the student body as a whole" (p. 21).

Overall, the past two decades of research on the topic of study abroad participation across AHE agree on factors that influences study abroad participation, but only few researchers have studied the nature of the factors themselves. Most researchers employ quantitative measures to make deductions and offer descriptions about a profile they already know a great deal about. The following section particularly focuses on the social and cultural capital influences, paying particular attention to how individual perceptions of and motivations to study abroad for AHE learners interact with social, institutional, personal, academic, and financial influences.

TENTATIVE SOLUTIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Authors generally position motivation in terms of an array of factors contributing to the decision to participate in study abroad (BailyShea, 2009; Booker, 2001; Miller, 2004; Peterson, 2003; Salisbury et al., 2009). Additionally, researchers examining motivations to study abroad question individuals who have expressed interest in wanting to go and individuals who have no interest in going abroad. Essentially, this leaves the current state of research with knowledge about how to predict the highest probability of studying abroad but fails to explain the sources serving as motivational influences.

Perceptions

Previous approaches to operationalizing influences on study abroad participation have implicitly included perception and motivation, little scholarship exists on distinguishing the independent/interdependent functions of each. Smith-Sebasto (2007) made the distinction in his research on teachers' motivations and perceptions to participate in a Residential Environmental

Education (REE) program. He used a grounded theory approach to explore the reasons why teachers chose to participate in a given study abroad program, and what or who influenced that. This study stresses AHE learners' prior experience and capability to connect their role in educational settings to their own knowledge bases.

The research carried out by Hackney, Boggs, and Borazan (2012) and Toncar et al. (2005) highlight the role that perception plays in terms of students' motivation to participate in a study abroad course. Students credited particular sources of social capital (someone they know who has participated in study abroad, the university offering information about study abroad opportunities, and advisors) as resources utilized in forming perceptions about what study abroad is and what programs are available (Albers-Miller et al., 1999). Further, this line of research demonstrates real and perceived concerns related to study abroad participation stem from a complex decision-making process influenced by employability, academic deadlines, and goals as well as financial issues. Business students' expressed concerns and perceptions of study abroad opportunities are situated within an adult-centred approach whereby an individual must negotiate multiple complex cognitions in order to feel motivated to participate in that opportunity (Hackney et al., 2012; Toncar et al., 2005).

As discussed earlier, both social and cultural capital are negotiated through an individual's personal context via family, friends, school, home life, work life, etc. Salisbury et al's. (2009, 2011) research drew a link between the construct of student-choice and the decision to participate in education abroad as both a model of cost versus benefits, as well as a model of perceived social and cultural capital. Salisbury et al. (2011) established that perceptions play a role in how AHE learners' understand their own competencies and abilities (i.e., capital) in order to navigate their social and cultural world. This internalization then becomes a way to decide whether or not study abroad is feasible, attainable and desirable.

While research in the early 2000s was placing new focus on resources students used to learn more about study abroad, subsequent research did not dig deeply into those conversations. Students identify that study abroad would be beneficial, fun, an overall good experience, useful for employment because of what they had heard from their peers, family, faculty, and staff at the academic institution (Albers-Miller et al., 1999). Albers-Miller et al. (1999) found that students perceived study abroad in a positive light, regardless of major. However, the researchers did not identify what conversations or specific messages contributed to positive perception formation. The researchers make it clear that sources of social and cultural capital are integral in perception formation, but do not place a lot of importance on what those conversation exchanges sound like for the student in a social interaction.

Motivation

Generating positive perceptions about study abroad has been used as a marketing tool to encourage motivation since the early 1930's. Integrating insights from perception formation into consequential motivation provides a way for researchers to elucidate the particular sources/messages serving as cultural and social capital and the influences they bear on AHE learners' ultimate decision to study abroad. Perceptions, additionally, become a tool used to draw AHE learners into participation in study abroad programs (Meras, 1932).

While expressed goals of a given study abroad program play a part in an individual's positive perception of that particular study abroad program, the ultimate motivation to act lies at the intersection of a more dynamic interplay of cognitions. Kitsantas (2004) found goals related to cross-cultural development, and desire to engage socially with peers were among the most significant findings in evaluating motivation to participate in courses abroad. Weirs-Jenseen (2003) highlighted academic competition, and family heritage can also motivate AHE learners. Goals and family heritage varies

from student to student and is, therefore, an important and individualised determining factor. Griner and Sobol (2014) indicate that studying abroad must be considered within the cultural context. For Chinese and Indian AHE learners, motivations may lie in perceptions of a US education, since it is the most popular destination to study abroad (Griner & Sobol, 2014). Together, these findings lend support to the idea that social and cultural capital, accessed via interactions with friends, family and faculty play a relatively powerful role in terms of encouraging motivation.

Jarvis and Peel (2008) further addressed issues related to motivation suggesting AHE learners' motives and perceptions extend further than goals established by the study abroad program. They found that students use study abroad courses to engage in novel and exciting experiences, get to know new people (from the home campus), and to escape the mundane. Further, perceptions of and motivations to participate in a particular study abroad program can be reconciled through multiple socially and culturally bound influences. Nyaupane et al., (2011) extended discussions about motivations to study abroad for university students noting social capital not only plays a role in encouraging participation, but it could also motivate the student to study abroad in a specific destination:

> An individual's social ties, in this case, close friends who live in a foreign country, can influence the value placed upon certain destinations. Further, the importance of academic motivations for the population under examination, university study abroad students, in choosing a destination region to travel can be a reflection of the norms and values of the reference group for these students. (p. 213).

Together, approaches to evaluating motivations to study abroad emphasize message production within social and cultural ties, especially when considering the low percentage of AHE learners who participate in study abroad each year. Establishing a new direction for research concerned with study abroad participation provides new avenues to increase participation across groups who have been historically underrepresented in the US and around the globe. Identifying resources contributing to perception formation, specifically from social networks and cultural interactions, may serve to produce meaning about what study abroad is, what it offers, and how AHE learners become motivated by those messages.

One thing researchers concerned with study abroad participation can agree upon is the influence of social networks on perceptions of and motivations to study abroad (BailyShea, 2009; Miller, 2004; Peterson, 2003; Salisbury et al., 2009). Further, including socio-cultural considerations on perceptions of and motivations to study abroad for AHE learners holds potential to reveal new perspectives and bridge gaps in previous research concerned with study abroad participation. However, it is clear that challenges persist. Salisbury et al. (2009) suggest: "there is little indication of the degree to which these responses were evidence of an active barrier to participation or a retroactive justification for the decision not to participate" (p. 121). Scholars in study abroad research are challenged by a multidimensional issue convoluted by both actual and perceived influences to participation.

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