

## SPORT MANAGEMENT

# Sport Management Majors' Perceived Motivators and Barriers to Participation in a College-Sponsored International Experience

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## Abstract

*This study determined the perceived motivators and barriers of sport management majors to participate in a college-sponsored study abroad experience. An online survey was administered to 180 undergraduate and graduate sport management students from across the United States. The top motivators were (1) overall life experience, (2) the opportunity to live in another country or culture, and (3) résumé builder, while the top barriers were (1) finances, (2) missing social time and events on campus, and (3) lack of knowledge about opportunities—relatively consistent with both open-response and rank-order question types. Not highlighted in previous research, open-response questions revealed that “meeting new people and having fun” (6.7%) and “uncomfortable being away from home” (19.4%) were mentioned as a top motivator and barrier, respectively. Most notably, only 2.8% of the sport management student sample had studied abroad. This article*

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*discusses implications of these findings, focusing on recommendations for increasing participation in college-sponsored international experiences for sport management students.*

With the increase of technology infiltrated into modern life, sport has expanded globally. Sports that were once common in only the smallest of markets have been exploding internationally. Li, MacIntosh, and Bravo (2011) state that the globalization of cultures' native sports not only expresses their national characteristics, but also helps to internationalize those cultures. Sport can reflect the differences in cultures, which means that globalizing sport introduces a variety of societies to the world. Since 1896, the modern Olympic Games have immersed the world of sport on an international stage. The commercialization and broadcasting of the Olympics exploded at the 1984 Los Angeles Summer Olympic Games, where the events were broadcast on ABC for a record \$225 million broadcasting deal in 37 countries (Li et al., 2011). This provided sport an even larger global spotlight by being the most economically successful Olympic Games in modern history. Since the Los Angeles Olympics, the Olympics have become largely reliant on commercialization—sponsorship deals, broadcasting rights, and merchandising. The Olympics, along with other international events such as the FIFA World Cup, is largely responsible for the globalization of sport. International operations are necessary for the long-term growth and stability of sport organizations because of today's shrinking world. Thus, sport managers must be capable of handling sport on a global scale to highly succeed in the industry.

Interest in studying abroad has grown among U.S. college students. In the 2015–2016 academic year, the number of American college students studying abroad increased 3.8% from the previous year from 313,415 students to 325,339 students (National Association of Foreign Student Advisors [NAFSA], 2017). Although study abroad experiences have continued to grow in popularity, only about 1.6% of U.S. college students study abroad (NAFSA, 2017). The U.S. government attempted to increase the number of students studying abroad annually to 1 million by 2017 through a bipartisan federal commission established by President Bush and Congress in 2005 (Stroud, 2010). While the total number of students studying abroad only reached 332,655 students during the 2016–2017

academic year, this figure represents a 2.3% increase from the previous year (NAFSA, 2017). Colleges attempt to increase study abroad interest by offering unique experiences, such as short-term study abroad trips, or by making an international education experience a requirement for graduation (Stroud, 2010). Some argue that promoting study abroad is essential for colleges and universities to create a more diversified and globalized student body, and world. NAFSA (2017) claims it is detrimental to society if we ignore the essential aspect of international education when 95% of this nation's product consumers live outside of the United States. Using international experiences in educating college students can help prepare them for a globalized and interconnected modern world.

## **Study Abroad**

### **Common Benefits**

Studying abroad has become a more prevalent aspect of the typical collegiate career. Many individuals believe that participation in a study abroad program will give them an incomparable and unique experience. Participating in an international educational experience has many potential benefits. Studying abroad could increase international concern/awareness, provide cross-cultural interests, improve personal development, create global mindedness, increase foreign language skills, increase global knowledge, improve cross-cultural skills, and provide a greater global perspective (Bunch, Blackburn, DanJean, Stair, & Blanchard, 2015; Jenny & Jenny, 2016; Stroud, 2010). These benefits have persuaded more college students to study abroad. Individuals who have already participated in a program often enlighten other students about their experience, which can initiate the idea for classmates to consider study abroad options.

Yet possible benefits from studying abroad differ from factors that motivate individuals to consider participating in a program. These factors often initially spark an interest in prospective study abroad participants, while the benefits come from participation in an experience. Students are more motivated to participate in an educational international experience if they perceive the program as important, wish to improve their understanding of other cultures, see the possibility of increased employability, believe that participation will boost their résumé, have an interest in diverse countries

and cultures, and see the experience as a good way to travel (Bunch et al., 2015).

## **Effect**

Experiences that send students to different countries help to globalize and internationalize the world. With the growing rate of international business (World Trade Organization, 2015), a student's study abroad experience can create new job opportunities—increasing employability for abroad and home-nation organizations. Currently, only 5.5% of students who study abroad spend a full year away from their home university, with 37% spending a semester away and 52% participating in a short-term program (Stroud, 2010). Of note, the effects of short-term study abroad experiences may not be as widely experienced with semester-long and yearlong programs. Many short-term programs are faculty led and structured, compared with the more independent semester-long and yearlong programs. Faculty-led programs often include a specific for-credit academic course that incorporates international travel geared toward course content while usually also exploring the country's language, culture, history, society, environment, architecture, and art (Guyer, 2011). Short-term programs permit many course options, which also assist students with less flexible course loads in being able to participate. The chance to study abroad provides “both an academic and cultural experience that cannot be duplicated in the classroom” (Guyer, 2011, p. 17). Offering college students the opportunity to partake in an international experience may equip them with unique skills and experiences that could affect their future careers.

## **Common Barriers**

Although studying abroad is often portrayed as an entirely positive experience, there are some obstacles to participation. College students typically stress about a number of factors, including money and grades. Common stressors of college students include the academic environment, being on their own in a new atmosphere, financial responsibility, sexual identity and orientation, exposure to new people, and making important decisions (Bulo & Sanchez, 2014). Some of these potential barriers include the complexity of the study abroad application process, paying for the program, finding affordable housing, unsupportive family members or friends, concern over

future academic plan, lack of information about opportunities, lack of foreign language skills, credit transfer, lack of university support, and overall cost (Bunch et al., 2015; Stroud, 2010). These perceived (and actual) barriers appear to hinder the majority of college students from participating in an educational international experience.

Stroud (2010) explored the effect of factors such as parental income and education, gender, race, intended major, geographic distance from home, and attitudes about other cultures on the perceived barriers to participation in a program. There is a severe disparity in the demographics of students who study abroad, with only 35% of males and 17% of ethnic minorities doing so (Stroud, 2010). Therefore, while many college students are deterred from participating in a study abroad program, specific groups may be more significantly affected by these obstacles. Additionally, college students at larger research universities are less likely to participate in an educational international experience, compared to students who attend a smaller liberal arts college (Stroud, 2010). This could be due to the concentrated efforts and missions of liberal arts colleges to provide international opportunities, whereas research institutions have a different focus. These factors may deter many college students from looking into participating in a short- or long-term study abroad experience.

### **Sport Management Majors' Motivators and Barriers**

Stroud (2010) stated that business management is one of the most represented fields of study among study abroad participants. Business-related majors are often similar from country to country, which may make it easier for individuals to take courses that will transfer back to their home university. Sport management (i.e., sport administration) degree programs, like business management programs, may afford students similar schedule flexibility, thus potentially providing students in these programs greater opportunities to study abroad. Empirical evidence demonstrates that sport management majors often perceive many of the same motivators as other students. These motivators include increased cultural knowledge, personal maturation, sport business professional development, creative thinking skills, increased global awareness, creation of interpersonal relationships dissimilar with others, increased excitement for future travel abroad, self-confidence, and practical application of

material learned in courses (Appleby & Faure, 2015; Cunningham, Bopp, & Sagas, 2010; Fairley & Tyler, 2009; Jones & Cunningham, 2008).

However, sport management students also experience barriers to participation in a study abroad experience. Common barriers to studying abroad for sport management students include language differences, affordability, cultural differences such as foreign currency and new food, separation from friends and family, job obligations, delayed graduation, difficulties with credit transfer, time, and feeling isolated and alone (Appleby & Faure, 2015; Cunningham et al., 2010; Fairley & Tyler, 2009; Jones & Cunningham, 2008). Undoubtedly, all college students may face many of these barriers and similar obstacles when deciding upon participation in a college-sponsored international experience. Although sport management students may have more program flexibility for a study abroad experience, the aforementioned barriers may still inhibit these students from taking advantage of available opportunities.

Only four studies that investigated study abroad experiences with sport management college students were found. First, Appleby and Faure (2015) studied the short-term study abroad perceptions of four students from one university at the London Olympics through qualitative interviews. Results indicated that the participants perceived that the study abroad experience created a chance for professional development, provided an opportunity to apply sport management curriculum knowledge, and facilitated overall self-development. Next, Fairley and Tyler (2009) analyzed 38 student reflection papers after five annual short-term, sport-focused study abroad trips to Australia. Each participant was from the same university. Results indicated that trip activities were essential to teaching foreign culture and that group interactions (i.e., informal discussion and exposure to other group members' experiences) can be essential to enriching the learning environment.

In addition, Cunningham et al. (2010) researched a group of 20 American and international students from one university who were studying sport management abroad together. The questionnaire-based study investigated intergroup friendships, cross-cultural anxiety, and outgroup (i.e., people different from oneself) evaluations. Results highlighted many benefits of intergroup

contact among students of diverse backgrounds who are studying abroad together. Finally, through a survey questionnaire method, Jones and Cunningham (2008) investigated the potential barriers and supports to studying abroad of 19 sport management students at one university. Findings indicated that benefits and barriers were associated with the participants' beliefs in their abilities to study abroad (i.e., study abroad self-efficacy), which was positively associated with interest in studying abroad.

Few studies have conducted research regarding sport management majors' perceived motivators and barriers to participating in a college-sponsored international experience. Of the few studies that have been conducted, all recruited participants from a single university and utilized a small sample size (e.g., 4 to 38 students). Additionally, none of these studies utilized open-response questions when exploring perceived motivators and barriers to studying abroad and, except for the Jones and Cunningham (2008) study, all were performed after the study abroad experience was completed. Utilizing a large sample from varying universities across the nation, this study wanted to determine the factors that sport management majors perceive as motivators and barriers to participating in a college-sponsored international experience, including long-term (i.e., semester-long or yearlong) and short-term (i.e., spring/fall break, summer, faculty-led) trips.

The research questions that guided this study included (1) What are sport management college students' perceived motivators to going on a college-sponsored international experience? (2) What are sport management college students' perceived barriers to going on a college-sponsored international experience? This study's findings of a large nationwide sample will assist study abroad offices and, in particular, sport management program faculty in creating effective marketing strategies and study abroad programs for sport management majors, by providing the perceived factors that motivate and hinder these students from participating.

## **Method**

### **Design and Participants**

A mixed-methods design employing a survey with quantitative and open-response questions was used. Sampling of participants

occurred through all-student electronic mailing lists, informational e-mails, and word of mouth. Participants included students from colleges or universities across the United States who were majoring in sport management/administration. Of the 772 students who were e-mailed the survey, 180 responded (23.3% response rate). Participants were incentivized through a t-shirt and water-bottle raffle. Table 1 lists participant demographics. Table 6 lists demographic information for the five students who had studied abroad. Institutional review board approval and participant consent was obtained prior to the start of the study.

**Table 1**  
*Participant Demographics*

<b>Variable</b>	<b><i>n</i></b>	<b>%</b>
Gender		
Male	115	65.7
Female	60	34.3
Age (in years)	<i>M</i> : 21.26	<i>SD</i> : 3.73
GPA		
2.5–2.99	61	34.9
3.0–3.49	55	31.4
3.5 or higher	32	18.3
2.0–2.49	23	13.1
1.99 or below	4	2.3
University		
Coastal Carolina University	79	45.1
Winthrop University	40	22.9
Marshall University	23	13.1
University of Alabama	10	5.7
University of New Haven	8	4.6
Wingate University	5	2.9
Flagler College	5	2.9
Gonzaga University	3	1.7
Southern Mississippi University	2	1.1
Distance of University From Permanent Home		
More than 100 miles	107	61.1
100 miles or less	68	38.9

**Table 1 (cont.)**

<b>Variable</b>	<b><i>n</i></b>	<b>%</b>
Class		
Junior	59	33.7
Senior	41	23.4
Sophomore	34	19.4
Freshman	30	17.1
Graduate	11	6.3
Transfer Student		
Non-transfer	119	68.0
Transfer	56	32.0
Race/Ethnicity		
Caucasian	134	76.6
African American	30	17.1
Hispanic/Latino	6	3.4
Other	4	2.3
Asian/Pacific Islander	1	0.6
United States Citizenship Status		
U.S. citizen	172	98.3
Other	2	1.1
Dual citizenship	1	0.6
Chance of Studying Abroad		
Very little chance	50	28.6
Some chance	47	26.9
No chance	45	25.7
Very good chance	30	17.1
I am scheduled to study abroad	3	1.7

*Note.* Table 6 lists the remaining demographic information of the five of participants who had studied abroad.

## **Survey and Procedures**

The survey was created and distributed via e-mail through the online survey software Qualtrics (Qualtrics Research Suite, Provo, UT). Study abroad survey topics and questions were modified from two past studies (Bunch et al., 2015; Stroud, 2010). Demographic questions such as distance from home and intended major were derived from variables used in research done by Stroud (2010). Potential

motivators and barriers investigated in Likert-type questions, as well as ranking questions, were taken from a study performed by Bunch et al. (2015). Additionally, the survey questionnaires were reviewed and validated by two international studies center directors from different colleges who served as content matter experts. Adjustments and additions were made after these individuals gave their input on the necessity of certain demographic questions and on the wording and inclusion of other study abroad-related questions.

The survey included 39 questions. First, the participants were asked 10 demographic questions. The demographic questions were followed by one main filtering question that determined the likelihood of a student participating in a study abroad experience and was measured using the answers “No chance,” “Very little chance,” “Some chance,” “Very good chance,” “I am scheduled to go on a study abroad trip,” and “I have already done a study abroad trip.” Those who answered “I have already done a study abroad trip” continued to a series of four questions that identified the characteristics of their study abroad experience and two open-response questions that targeted the two guiding research questions.

All other respondents continued on to a series of 21 questions that inquired about the perceived motivators and barriers of participating in a study abroad experience, starting with two open-response questions: “What, if any, motivators are there to studying abroad?” and “What, if any, barriers are there to studying abroad?” These open-response questions were asked first so the participants could list the factors at the forefront of their mind without being influenced by suggested responses. Next, two questions asked participants to rank nine of the most common motivators and nine of the most common barriers to studying abroad, as indicated in the literature (Stroud, 2010; Bunch et al., 2015): “Click and drag items in order of the biggest motivators for you in going on a study abroad experience” and “Click and drag items in order of the biggest barriers for you in going on a study abroad experience.” The remaining questions asked participants to rate those nine motivators and nine barriers on a 4-point Likert-type scale (i.e., 1 = *not at all*; 2 = *a little bit*; 3 = *very much so*; 4 = *that is the main reason why I want to study abroad*). An example Likert-type motivator item was “Overall life experience

makes me want to study abroad,” while a sample barrier item was “Lack of interest is keeping me from studying abroad.”

## Data Analysis

With respect to the open-response answers, codes were created based upon the predetermined factors. Responses that did not fall into those codes were further analyzed through an iterative process, in which additional themes were created (Given, 2016). This constant comparison method was repeated until a full saturation of codes was reached within the data set by the researchers. An independent researcher reviewed these codes as a form of external audit of the qualitative analysis.

The quantifiable data were analyzed via descriptive statistics in SPSS 21 (IBM Corporation, Armonk, NY). The rank-order (i.e., click and drag) questions were initially ranked from 1 to 10, with 1 being most relevant and 10 being least relevant to the participant. For the data analysis, the point system was reversed so that each item with a ranking of 1 was assigned a score of 10, 2 was assigned a 9, and so on. The rankings were reversed so that higher means would represent higher rankings, which clarified the results.

## Results

### Guiding Question 1

In the open-response portion of the survey, participants listed their top motivators for studying abroad. Only 138 of the participants answered this question, but the top five motivators were living in a different country or culture (35.6%), life experience (19.4%), meeting new people or having fun (6.7%), diversity in education (3.3%), and ability to use scholarship money (3.3%). The top three motivators were listed by 61.7% of participants who completed this question.

Moreover, Table 2 shows the participants' perceived motivators for the rank-order (i.e., click and drag) portion of the survey. Again, this question gave participants nine options of motivators, and they ranked them from most important to least important. The top three motivators were overall life experience ( $M = 9.25$ ,  $SD = 1.29$ ), live in another country/culture ( $M = 7.87$ ,  $SD = 1.73$ ), and résumé builder

( $M = 7.53$ ,  $SD = 1.94$ ). Likewise, Table 3 displays participants' perceived motivators based on their answers to the Likert-type questions. Participants answered according to how much each motivator affected their decision to study abroad. The top five motivators paralleled the responses in Table 2, indicating high internal reliability.

**Table 2**  
*Participants' Perceived Motivators (Rank Order)*

<b>Motivation</b>	<b><i>M</i></b>	<b><i>SD</i></b>
Overall life experience	9.25	1.293
Live in another country/culture	7.87	1.727
Résumé builder	7.53	1.944
Personal development	6.61	1.575
Increased chance of getting a job	5.93	1.585
Learn a language	5.11	2.155
Graduate school	4.42	2.107
Work abroad after graduation	4.31	2.000
Importance placed by advisor/university	2.67	1.310
Other	1.28	0.814

*Note.* 10 = most relevant; 1 = least relevant.

**Table 3**  
*Participants' Perceived Motivators (Likert-Type)*

<b>Motivation</b>	<b><i>M</i></b>	<b><i>SD</i></b>
Live in another country/culture	2.58	0.892
Overall life experience	2.55	0.992
Résumé builder	2.31	0.787
Personal development	2.12	0.825
Increased chance of getting a job	2.04	0.761
Work abroad after graduation	2.00	0.878
Learn a language	1.97	0.816
Graduate school	1.82	0.786
Importance placed by advisor/university	1.51	0.685

*Note.* 1 = not at all; 2 = a little bit; 3 = very much so; 4 = that is the main reason why I want to study abroad.

## Guiding Question 2

Prior to the rank-order and Likert-type questions, participants listed their top barriers to studying abroad in open-response format. Only 145 of the students answered this question, resulting in the top five barriers: finances (38.9%), uncomfortable being away from home (19.4%), language or culture (7.2%), logistics (e.g., living arrangements, lack of instant communication with friends/family, medical/medication issues, and religion; 3.3%), and missing social time or events on campus (2.8%). The top three barriers made up 65.5% of the responses for this question.

Furthermore, Table 4 displays the ranked order (i.e., most important to least important) of the common barriers to studying abroad as perceived by the participants. The top three ranked barriers were finances ( $M = 8.93$ ,  $SD = 1.56$ ), missing social time and events on campus ( $M = 7.07$ ,  $SD = 1.82$ ), and lack of knowledge about opportunities ( $M = 6.79$ ,  $SD = 1.68$ ). Additionally, Table 5 shows the participants' perceived barriers according to their answers to the Likert-type questions. The top Likert-type question barriers were consistent with the top three rank-order responses presented in Table 4, again indicating high instrument internal reliability.

**Table 4**  
*Participants' Perceived Barriers (Rank Order)*

<b>Barrier</b>	<b><i>M</i></b>	<b><i>SD</i></b>
Finances	8.93	1.561
Missing social time and events on campus	7.07	1.821
Lack of knowledge about opportunities	6.79	1.676
Lack of interest	6.53	3.221
Family influences	6.40	1.791
Too much work to apply/plan for	5.49	1.671
Course requirements for major	4.93	2.343
Significant other	4.14	2.252
GPA	3.14	1.901
Other	1.59	1.695

*Note.* 10 = most relevant; 1 = least relevant.

**Table 5***Participants' Perceived Barriers (Likert-Type)*

<b>Barrier</b>	<b><i>M</i></b>	<b><i>SD</i></b>
Finances	2.71	0.959
Missing social time and events on campus	2.06	0.895
Lack of knowledge about opportunities	1.99	0.769
Family influences	1.96	0.925
Too much work to apply/plan for	1.87	0.740
Course requirements for major	1.86	0.869
Lack of interest	1.66	0.855
Significant other	1.51	0.816
GPA	1.48	0.702

*Note.* 1 = not at all; 2 = a little bit; 3 = very much so; 4 = that is the main reason why I want to study abroad.

## **Participants Who Had Studied Abroad**

Table 6 presents the data collected from the five participants who had studied abroad. Only two of the five students participated in a long-term (i.e., semester-long or yearlong) study abroad experience, to England and Australia. The other three students participated in short-term international experiences to Estonia/Latvia, France, and Costa Rica. The top benefit to participating in a study abroad program listed by these participants was the opportunity to live in another country or culture. Conversely, the top cited barrier to participation was the language and culture, followed closely by finances. Further analysis was not conducted on these participants, as they accounted for less than 3% of the sample.

## **Discussion**

### **Guiding Question 1**

This study wanted to determine sport management college students' perceived motivators to going on a college-sponsored international experience. The findings were mostly consistent with those in the literature. The potential motivators used as major themes in the rank-order (i.e., click and drag) and Likert-type questions were

**Table 6**  
*Demographics and Results of Participants Who Had Studied Abroad*

Variable	Participant				
	1	2	3	4	5
Home University	Winthrop University	Wingate University	Winthrop University	University of Oregon	University of Alabama
Most Recent Study Abroad Trip	England	Estonia and Latvia	Melbourne, Australia	Paris, France	San Jose, Costa Rica
Length of Trip	Long-term	Short-term	Long-term	Short-term	Short-term
Sponsored by Current University?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Purpose of Trip	Coursework	Coursework	Coursework	Coursework	Coursework
Top Benefits	1. Live in another country or culture 2. Education in another country	1. Live in another country or culture 2. Live in another country or culture	1. Life experience 2. Meet new people and have fun	1. Live in another country or culture 2. Networking	1. Learn a new language 2. Live in another country or culture
Top Barriers	1. Language/culture being too far from home 2. Uncomfortable	1. Finances 2. Language/culture	1. Finances 2. Uncomfortable being too far from home	1. Language/culture 2. Logistics	1. Finances 2. Language/culture

*Note.* Long-term = semester or yearlong; short-term = spring/fall break, summer, or faculty-led.

mostly derived from the research of Bunch et al. (2015). Of these major themes, the top five motivators ranked in this study were overall life experience, opportunity to live in another country or culture, résumé builder, personal development, and increased chance of getting a job. Similarly, Jones and Cunningham's (2008) research with sport management students' perceptions of study abroad programs on their intentions to study abroad found that gained experience and travel opportunity were the main themes emerging from student responses. These are largely consistent with the findings in this study, where participants were given motivators to choose from (i.e., Tables 2 and 3).

In addition, although the open-response answers of the participants in this study were largely similar to those in past research (i.e., Appleby & Faure, 2015; Fairley & Tyler, 2009; Jones & Cunningham, 2008), of note, one of the top three mentioned motivators that had not been discussed in the literature was "having fun or meeting new people." Certainly within the sport business world, expanding professional networks is an integral skill important in being a successful sport manager. However, this motivator was only listed by 6.7% of the participants.

### **Guiding Question 2**

The second goal of this study was to explore sport management college students' perceived barriers of going on a college-sponsored international experience. Perceived barriers found in this study were similar to those found in previous research. Cunningham et al. (2010) discussed potential barriers including cultural barriers, language differences, and the preference to be around others who are similar. Moreover, language, cultural differences, being apart from friends and family, job obligations, and affordability were the main barriers found by Jones and Cunningham (2008). The findings in this study were largely similar, as the top three ranked barriers to participation were finances, missing social time on campus, and lack of knowledge about opportunities. For sport management students, missing social time on campus could mean missing sporting events, which may be a major concern for some students. Many attend or work at these sporting events to gain additional career-related experience. This could prove to be a major barrier in more ways than missing the social aspect of these sporting events.

In regard to the answers of the open-response questions, the themes were largely consistent with the other barriers listed in rank-order questions, which aligns with past research (Fairley & Tyler, 2009; Jones & Cunningham, 2008). However, one barrier that was newly discovered in this study was participants' discomfort with being away from home, which accounted for 19.4% of open responses. Sporting cultures are diverse around the world, and studying abroad may affect sport management students in missing certain American sporting seasons. For example, studying abroad during the fall semester would most likely result in missing American football, while studying abroad in the spring may result in missing baseball, depending on their location of travel.

## **Implications**

In this study, the most striking finding was that only 5 out of 180 sport management students who responded to the survey had studied abroad (2.8%). However, this statistic is slightly higher than the average 1.6% of all U.S. college students who study abroad every year (NAFSA, 2017). It appears not enough evidence exists or is commonly known by college students about the main benefits of studying abroad. Based on these low participation numbers, most students may perceive the barriers to studying abroad outweigh the benefits. Empirical research needs to study the effects of studying abroad and to study targeted interventions for counteracting the common perceived barriers to it. Also, future research should focus on students who have studied abroad and the benefits and barriers to participation they experienced.

Moreover, college study abroad offices and sport management faculty looking to increase participation in college-sponsored international experiences for sport management students may glean ideas from the results of this study. Sport management college-sponsored international programs should focus marketing and advertising toward the top motivators found in this study (Tables 2 and 3), combined with the top benefits listed by those who have studied abroad (Table 6). For example, the top benefit discovered in this study was the opportunity to live in another country or culture. Study abroad offices should market this opportunity to students and potential participants if they wish to increase the number of students in their

programs. Also, for instance, résumé builder was a top perceived benefit. Employers looking to hire sport management students with international experience or past sport management students who benefited within their career from a study abroad experience could speak to students who are considering studying abroad.

Additionally, programs wishing to increase sport management student participation in college-sponsored international experiences should look to assist students in overcoming the top perceived barriers found in Tables 4 and 5. For example, finances were consistently rated as the greatest perceived barrier to studying abroad. Offering financial aid opportunities (i.e., grants, scholarships, etc.) for study abroad programs may help programs to combat the perceived barrier that it costs too much to participate. To overcome this obstacle for study abroad travel occurring during winter or summer break, programs could connect the international experience with a fall or spring semester course and have students travel directly after the term so they do not have to register and pay winter or summer term course tuition. This may also assist students in applying financial aid toward the course, which may not qualify with winter or summer courses.

Moreover, missing social time and events on campus was listed as another top perceived barrier. To alleviate this barrier, faculty may consider taking larger groups of students on short-term study abroad programs, recommend that students encourage friends to register for the program as well, include pretrip team-building activities in an effort to increase social cohesion (Grieve, Whelan, & Meyers, 2000), and/or ensure internet is available during the trip so that students may stay “connected” to friends on campus via social media outlets (i.e., Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook, etc.). These suggestions may also assist with another open-response reported perceived barrier—uncomfortable being away from home.

To reduce lack of knowledge about opportunities, beyond sending e-mails and posting flyers about study abroad programs, faculty may consider having past students who have studied abroad speak about their experiences during introductory courses. They can also emphasize study abroad program options during academic advising, particularly with freshmen, so the international experience can be planned within their academic program.

## Limitations and Future Research

While this study included a sample of sport management majors larger than previous research, certainly a larger sample would increase generalizability of results. Likewise, this study was limited to students majoring in sport management. Thus, the generalizability of these findings may not transfer well to students in other areas of study as they may have differing motivators and barriers unique to their major. Additionally, future research investigating this topic might consider taking a qualitative approach through one-on-one interviews or focus group session in an attempt to add rich, thick descriptions of potential motivators and barriers. Finally, a future study might assess perceived motivators and barriers of studying abroad prior to a college-sponsored international experience and then compare whether perceptions matched reality after the trip.

## Conclusion

While this study had limitations, it is the first to incorporate a large nationwide sample (i.e., 180 students from 10 universities) while investigating sport management students' perceived motivators and barriers to participating in a college-sponsored international experience—increasing the generalizability of results. Moreover, this study is the first to report how many sport management students are currently studying abroad (2.8%). Furthermore, no past studies investigating sport management majors' studying abroad used open-response questions, which allowed for more exploratory responses. Finally, excluding Jones and Cunningham (2008), past research aimed at this sample focused on the effects of studying abroad after the experience (Appleby & Faure, 2015; Cunningham et al., 2010; Fairley & Tyler, 2009), rather than perceptions as in this study. Given the proliferation of global sport business, it is hoped that this is just the beginning of empirical research focused on sport management students participating in college-sponsored international experiences.

For sport management majors in this study, the biggest perceived motivators of participating in a college-sponsored international experience were overall life experience, the opportunity to live in another country or culture, and the belief that it would boost their résumé. Because these factors have been reported to motivate sport

management students to participate in a study abroad program, sport management programs and study abroad offices should aim to market these factors when advertising their international programs. Moreover, the major perceived barriers for these students were finances, missing social time and events on campus, and the lack of knowledge about opportunities. Faculty and study abroad staff hoping to increase sport management students' participation in college-sponsored international experiences should use creative ways to assist these students in overcoming the top perceived barriers found in this study.

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