INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION EXPERIENCES: WHY DO STUDENTS TAKE THEM, AND MORE IMPORTANTLY, WHY DO THEY CHOOSE NOT TO TAKE THEM?

Dr. Iris Berdrow
Assoc. Professor of Management
Bentley University, Waltham, MA
WISE 2016
AGENDA

- Context
- International Education
- Data Collection
- Descriptive results
- Interpretations
- Implications
University within a business school
Accredited by AACSB, EQUIS, NEASC
Undergraduate Curriculum:
- General education core
- General business core
- Majors/minors (including Liberal Studies Major)
Graduate Curriculum
- MBA, 7 MS Programs, MBA+MS
PhD Program
- Accountancy, Business
EXTERNAL IMPERATIVES

- **Business Imperative:**
  - Demand for managers & leaders capable of thinking transnationally (Maljers, 1992) and implementing cross-border strategies (Bartlett & Ghoshal, 1993/2003)
  - Shortage of internationally competent managers (Harris & Kumra, 2000)

- **Education Imperative:**
  - B Schools unable to reduce managerial gap created by accelerated pace of globalization (Kwok & Arpan, 2002)
  - B Schools held accountable for educational objectives (AACSB)
  - B Schools do not substantiate their claim they are producing globally oriented and competent students (Hunter, White & Godbey, 2006)
BENTLEY’S IMPERATIVE:

- **GB Learning Objectives:**
  - student’s ability to “demonstrate personal competencies associated with environments where there are cultural norms and behaviors different from their own.”

- **Strategic Plan:**
  - commitment to “preparing a diverse student body for leadership in complex, global organizations and ensuring its graduates are fully prepared for success in an increasingly connected and globalizing world.”
  - claim to produce “graduates capable of living and working anywhere through their appreciation of the need for local sensitivity and global relevance.”
**What is learned and how is it learned?**

**Discipline specific International courses:**
- Global Finance
- Global Management Behavior

**Country specific courses:**
- Chinese language
- Doing Business in Mexico
- East Asian Economics

**International Travel Programs:**
- Faculty led short term programs
- Semester abroad
- Exchange programs

**Within class simulations, case studies, role playing**
PEDAGOGICAL CONTEXT: INTERCULTURAL EFFECTIVENESS STUDY

Intent: to understand the Intercultural Effectiveness (IE) of undergraduate students, and the impact of academic initiatives on those skills.

Key stakeholders: students, faculty and the institution.

- Objectives:
  - Facilitating student awareness and development of their IE.
  - Providing faculty in general business courses with materials to incorporate global awareness into their course delivery.
  - Assessing IE as a learning outcome.
  - Testing the usefulness and ease of administration of the IES instrument as an IE assessment tool.
  - Informing curricular development discussions, particularly in the strategic domain of globalizing the curriculum.
MODEL FOR INTERCULTURAL EFFECTIVENESS STUDY AT BENTLEY

ENVIRONMENT
International Education Opportunities (IEO) Offered

What are student intentions, motivations and behaviors relative to IEO’s?

INTERCULTURAL EFFECTIVENESS IMPACT ASSESSMENT (IEIA)

INPUTS
Student Demographics and International Experiences Prior to Bentley

Are there differences in IES scores between gender, GPA, choice of major, national background?

OUTCOMES
Intercultural Effectiveness (IES) Scores

Is there a correlation between engaging in IEO’s and IES scores?
The IEIA collects data about students and their choices in order to understand the IES scores.

**Experience**
- Pre-Bentley international experience
- Bentley international education by type

**Behavioral Motivations**
- Motivation for taking/not taking an international experience

**Intentions**
- Intention of having none, one or more international experiences

**Demographic**
- Ethnicity
- Nationality
- Gender, GPA, Transfer student, Program Level, LSM, Honors
If IEO’s are important, and require resource commitments, how do we know why/why not students take them?

Environment
International Education Opportunities (IEO) Offered

Inputs
Student Demographics and International Experiences Prior to Bentley

Outputs
Intercultural Effectiveness (IES) Scores

Are there differences in IES scores between gender, GPA, choice of major, national background?

Is there a correlation between engaging in IEO’s and IES scores?

What are student intentions, motivations and behaviors relative to IEO’s?
DEFINING IEO’S

- As Bolen points out, there is cross use of the terms *international education, education abroad, study abroad* and *foreign study*.

- We are interested in global learning opportunities (GL Opportunities) that increase global learning outcomes (GL Outcomes). While those global learning opportunities can be experienced at home or abroad, we focus on educational experiences which occur in *out of country* locations.

- We define an international education opportunity as:
  - A Bentley faculty-led short term program to another country.
  - Attending school and/or completing an internship in another country while registered at Bentley.
  - Travel outside the US for an extended period, i.e. a month or longer, while registered at Bentley.
QUESTIONS: MOTIVATION TO PARTICIPATE

Of the following items, indicate whether and to what degree each influenced your decision to participate.


Marketing of the IE.
Timing/schedule of the IE.

Actual cost of the IE.
Personal interest in foreign languages, culture, travel.
Wanting a change of environment.
Perceived positive impact on career options.
Access to desirable quality of education and learning environment.
Access to desirable life style and living conditions.

Influence of friends or peers.
Influence of parents.
Influence of school staff, professors or mentors.
Opportunity for personal growth and development.
Meet new and different people.
Access to/connections with family, friends or partner.

Academic requirement.
Other?
How strong is your decision to not participate in an international experience? (sliding scale of 0-100)

1. There is no way I could be convinced to go
2. I am neutral about it
3. I could be convinced to go
QUESTIONS: MOTIVATION TO NOT PARTICIPATE

Of the following items, indicate whether and to what degree each influenced your decision to not participate.

1. Deciding Factor
2. Very Important
3. Somewhat Important
4. Weak Influence
5. Irrelevant to Decision

Not aware of any IEs.
Do not perceive the cost to be affordable.
Personal disinterest.
Do not want a change of environment.
Do not perceive a positive impact on my career.
Influence of peers/friends.
Parental Influence.
Influence of school staff, professors and/or mentors.
Do not want to challenge myself.
Does not fit/meet my academic requirements.
Other?
SAMPLE SIZE

- Undergraduates
- 2009 – 2014
- 503 had taken an international education opportunity
  - 91 Faculty-led short term program to another country
  - 203 Attending school and/or completing an internship in another country while registered at Bentley
  - 209 Travel outside the US for an extended period, i.e. one month or longer, while registered at Bentley
- 917 had not taken, and did not intend to take an international education opportunity
RESULTS – WHY PARTICIPATE?
Report
A Bentley faculty-led short term program to another country.

1. Irrelevant to decision
2. Weak Influence
3. Somewhat Important
4. Very Important
5. Deciding Factor

Values

- Marketing of the IE.
- Timings/schedule of the IE.
- Actual cost of the IE.
- Personal interest in foreign languages.
- Wanting a change of environment.
- Perceived positive impact on career options.
- Access to desirable quality of education and learning environment.
- Access to desirable life style and living conditions.
- Influence of friends or peers.
- Influence of parents.
- Influence of mentors.
- Influence of school staff, professors or other.
- Opportunity for personal growth and development.
- Meet new and different people.
- Access to/connections with family, friends, or partner.
- Academic requirement.
- Other?
Attending school and/or completing an internship in another country while ...
Report

Travel outside the US for an extended period, i.e. a month or longer while ...

Values

1. Irrelevant to decision
2. Weak Influence
3. Somewhat Important
4. Very Important
5. Deciding Factor
1. Irrelevant to decision
2. Weak Influence
3. Somewhat Important
4. Very Important
5. Deciding Factor
Other reasons provided for taking an international education experience (percentage of 22 responses)

- Personal interest: 36.4%
- Athletics: 27.3%
- Financial aid: 23.9%
- Reputation of school: 10.5%
- Program requirement: 5.9%
- Internship offered: 3.6%
RESULTS – WHY NOT PARTICIPATE?
Strength of reasons to not participate
(1 = Deciding Factor, 5 = Irrelevant to Decision)

- Other?
- Do not perceive the cost to be affordable.
- Does not fit/meet my academic requirements.
- Personal disinterest.
- Do not want a change of environment.
- Parental Influence.
- Do not perceive a positive impact on my career.
- Influence of peers/friends.
- Not aware of any IEs.
- Influence of school staff, professors and/or mentors.
- Do not want to challenge myself.
Other reason provided for not taking an international education opportunity (percentage of 186 responses)

- work
- student violations
- missed deadline
- visa issues
- age
- part time student

- concerns about impact on my GPA/quality of education
- don't want to be away that long
- not interested
- health reasons
- other school commitments
- international student
- family obligations
- already travelled, don't feel the need to go again
- program restrictions
- too expensive
- athlete

- Other reasons
What motivates students to take IEO’s?

- Personal interest in foreign languages, culture and travel.
- Opportunity for personal growth and development.
- Meet new and different people.

Least influential:

- Academic requirements
- Influence of school staff, professors or mentors
- Cost
- Peers and Parents, although they were slightly more influential for internships and semester abroad
- Marketing of the program, although slightly more influential for faculty led programs
Yet, of those who had never taken and did not intend to take an IEO, 40% were neutral about their decision and 40% could be convinced to go.

Reasons for not taking IEO’s?
- Cost
- Program restrictions
- Personal disinterest

For those students who could not be convinced to go, these reasons were much stronger:
- Do not want a change of environment
- Do not perceive a positive impact on my career

The factor that had the largest change in influence between *could not be convinced* and *could be convinced*: Personal Disinterest.
Additional reasons for not taking an IEO?

- Interferes with athletic commitments
- Prohibitive cost
- Program conflicts –
  - Transfer students who have a shorter timeframe for degree completion
  - Degree requirements not fulfilled by host institution program
WHAT CAN WE DO?

- Strengthen our message that international education is important and beneficial for personal and professional reasons.
- Mentor students and provide support to overcome their personal disinterest.
- Provide accessible financial aid.
- Resolve the degree program restrictions.

Also need to recognize that some priorities will still restrict participation – for example, athletics.
THANK YOU