ISSN: 2148-9955

International Journal of Research in Education and Science (IJRES)

www.ijres.net

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Josiah Zachary Nyangau
Louisiana State University, USA

To cite this article:

Nyangau, J.Z. (2020). Faculty engagement in internationalization: The role of personal agency beliefs. *International Journal of Research in Education and Science (IJRES)*, *6*(1), 74-85.

International Journal of Research in Education and Science
Volume 6, Issue 1, Winter 2020 ISSN: 2148-9955

Faculty Engagement in Internationalization: The Role of Personal Agency Beliefs

Josiah Zachary Nyangau

Article Info

Article History

Received:
30 April 2019

Accepted:
10 September 2019

Keywords

Faculty international activities
Internationalization
Barriers to faculty international engagement
Higher education
Academic rewards

Abstract

As higher education in the United States has experienced a proliferation of internationalization activities, there has been a steady stream of studies directed at understanding institutional rationales for internationalization. Further, an emerging body of research seeks to understand faculty motivations of international involvement. However, scant attention has been devoted to understanding the role of personal agency beliefs in facilitating faculty international engagement. This study, part of a larger project, draws on in-depth interviews with fifteen faculty to address this topic. The findings show that strong efficacy beliefs and positive perceptions about organizational context are strong influences on faculty behavior relative to international engagement.

Introduction

Studies indicate that higher education in the United States continues to experience a proliferation of internationalization initiatives (Altbach & Knight, 2007; American Council on Education 2012). Several studies have examined and documented institutional rationales for internationalization (de Wit, 1995, 2000; Knight & de Wit, 1997; Van der Wende, 1997) and more recently, faculty motivations for involvement in international activities (Beatty, 2013; Niehaus & Williams, 2016; Friesen, 2013; Nyangau, 2018). Yet questions regarding the role personal agency beliefs play with respect to informing faculty behavior relative to international engagement remain unexplored. This study responds to this gap in our knowledge. Drawing upon perspectives from motivational systems theory (Ford, 1992) and the self-knowledge and social knowledge framework (Blackburn & Lawrence, 1995), I interviewed fifteen (N=15) faculty at State University to understand their perceptions concerning personal agency beliefs for international engagement. State University is a large public research university in Midwestern United States where guidelines for tenure and promotion lack criteria for recognizing and rewarding faculty international activities.

Personal agency in the present study was conceptualized in terms of faculty beliefs about self-efficacy and the social environment for internationalization. Ford (1992) reminds us that perceptions about personal agency involve two sets of beliefs: capability beliefs (self-efficacy) and context beliefs. Accordingly, the present study posits two fundamental orienting questions: First, how do personal agency beliefs influence faculty engagement in internationalization? To address this question, the study asked participants to discuss the skills and dispositions they deemed necessary for success in international engagement.

The study also inquired into participants perceptions regarding the broader institutional context for internationalization; that is rewards and judgments about collegial support. Second, what do faculty describe as the major obstacles to international engagement? Perceptions of self-efficacy in this study represent faculty agentive capabilities to develop and implement programs and activities with international dimensions. Faculty are better placed to assess an institution's overall environment for internationalization as they experience it more closely in the tenure and promotion process. The findings of this study offer higher education leaders insights for establishing appropriate policies and environments aimed at scaffolding and scaling faculty involvement in internationalization.

Theoretical Framework

Motivation in humans is certainly a complex and layered subject and scholars have over the past several decades posited multiple and varied theories explaining it. The most commonly cited conceptions in this regard include, inter alia, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation theory (Austin & Gamson's (1983), personal expectancy theories particularly self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977; 1997), motivational systems theory (Ford, 1992), and the self-knowledge and social knowledge framework (Blackburn & Lawrence, 1995). A comprehensive review of each of these models is beyond the scope of this study as our focus lies principally with perspectives from motivational systems theory (Ford, 1992) and the self-knowledge and social knowledge framework (Blackburn & Lawrence, 1995).

Motivational systems theory (Ford, 1992) postulates that motivation is built on three fundamental elements -- personal goals, personal agency beliefs, and emotions --which function as an integrated system "to direct, energize, and regulate" (p. 3) behavior designed to achieve desired outcomes. Ford's formulation thus views motivation as the "organized patterning of an individual's personal goals, emotions, and personal agency beliefs" (p. 78). Ford's model is compelling as it takes a broad, all-encompassing approach and considers the "functioning of the whole person-in-context" (p. 66).

Personal goals refer to the "desired future states and outcomes" (p. 73); in other words, those purposes that an individual seeks to achieve. Personal agency beliefs encompass capability beliefs and context beliefs (Ford, 1992). Capability beliefs involve an individual's self-judgement in relation to the skills or abilities required to accomplish desired outcomes.

By contrast, context beliefs entail perceptions of organizational responsiveness to one's work and thus necessarily span two interrelated dimensions -- institutional support (rewards) and collegial support. Ford (1992) reasons that capability beliefs interact with context beliefs to inform individuals' decisions concerning how proceed relative to the pursuit of desired outcomes. Specifically, strong capability beliefs and positive context beliefs stimulate and sustain goal-directed activities whereas weak capability beliefs and negative context beliefs likely inhibit actions pertinent to goal attainment (Ford, 1992).

The final element in Ford's (1992) model is emotions, which he postulates, yield important "evaluative information" or feedback (p. 51) that supports decision-making. Put simply, emotions complete the sequence of events in the motivation cycle; positive emotions rouse and energize actions related to goal-attainment whilst negative emotions discourage such engagement (Ford, 1992). "The motivational burden," Ford writes, "tends to shift from goals to personal agency beliefs and emotions once a commitment has been made to pursue a goal" (p. 250). Indeed, studies indicate that an inextricable link exists between emotions and faculty scholarship, and Neumann (2009) is perhaps one of the foremost in this regard. "Through a decade of listening to university professors describe their early post-tenure careers," Neumann writes, "I have come to understand that their construction of subject matter knowledge is hardly free of emotion…" (p. 54).

Perhaps a more parsimonious framework for measuring faculty productivity is that proposed by Blackburn and Lawrence (1995). The authors posit that faculty behavior can be explained using two constructs namely self-knowledge and social knowledge. Self-knowledge comprises an individual's "self-assessed competence" to accomplish pertinent tasks; in other words, "one's sense of efficacy in situations …" (Blackburn & Lawrence, 1995, p. 16). This self-judgment, the authors further explain, encapsulates both personal attitudes and personality dispositions.

By contrast, social knowledge refers to individuals' perceptions of their social environment. This includes judgements relating to the institutional context (rewards) as well as collegial support. Faculty work, the authors write, is informed "by interest, by self-knowledge concerning their competence and their chances of success, and by the social knowledge they trust with regard to what students, peers, and administrators value and reward" (p. 106).

The foregoing discussion makes clear that Bandura's (1977) construct of self-efficacy; "beliefs in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments" (Bandura, 1997, p. 3), is a fundamental tenet in both motivational systems theory (Ford, 1992) and the self-knowledge and social knowledge framework (Blackburn & Lawrence, 1995). Separately, each of these models has its own set of limitations; taken together, however, they offer valuable perspectives for examining faculty perceptions concerning self-judged competence (self-efficacy) and institutional context for international engagement.

Review of the Literature

There are multiple threads in the literature pertaining to international higher education, the foremost of which relates to institutional drivers for internationalization. Studies have identified several rationales in this regard, typically organized according to four broad categories, namely: academic, political, socio-cultural, and economic motivations (de Wit, 1995, 2000; Knight & de Wit, 1997; Van der Wende, 1997). While each of these categories represents important purposes, recent studies indicate that economic rationales have emerged as the most prominent drivers of internationalization in higher education (Altbach, 2016; Altbach & Knight, 2007; Croom, 2012; Stromquist, 2007).

More recently, the focus of the literature has shifted as a growing number of studies explore *faculty* motivations of engagement in internationalization. While this literature is emerging, the few studies available indicate that faculty are motivated by a diversity of interrelated rationales including the desire to enhance the student learning experience (Beatty, 2013; Friesen, 2013; Niehaus & Williams, 2016; Nyangau, 2018) and to prepare global citizens (Beatty, 2013; Friesen, 2013; Niehaus & Williams, 2016; Nyangau, 2018). Studies have also reported that faculty interests and values inform decisions of involvement in internationalization endeavors (Beatty, 2013; Finkelstein & Sethi, 2014; Finkelstein, Walker, & Chen, 2009; 2013; Friesen, 2013; Nyangau, 2018). Other studies have indicated that organizational characteristics play a critical role in facilitating faculty international engagement. Specifically, faculty at institutions where activities with international dimensions are codified within the academic reward structure are more likely to participate (Beatty, 2013; Finkelstein and Sethi, 2014; Friesen, 2013).

Lastly, a smattering of studies illuminate the barriers faculty encounter in relation to internationalization, the most prominent of which include the lack of rewards (Andreasen, 2003; Beatty, 2013; Childress, 2010; Dewey & Duff, 2009; Friesen, 2013; Green, 2007; Siaya & Hayward, 2003), time constraints (Andreasen, 2003; Beatty, 2013; Dewey & Duff, 2009), and insufficient funding (Andreasen, 2003; Beatty, 2013; Childress, 2010; Dewey & Duff, 2009; Green, 2007; Siaya & Hayward, 2003). Although these studies suggest the substance of barriers faculty encounter in relation to international engagement, the literature lacks a systematic examination of this issue.

The preceding discussion offers a summary that contextualizes developments relating to internationalization in higher education. Clearly, scant attention has been directed toward discerning faculty perceptions concerning self-efficacy and institutional context for international engagement. Research on this topic is especially warranted where guidelines for tenure and promotion may not offer recognition and rewards for faculty activities with international dimensions. This study addresses this limitation in extant research and adds to our understanding of pertinent faculty perspectives.

Methods

This study used an exploratory design to investigate two issues that bear on faculty engagement in internationalization. The first relates to faculty beliefs concerning agency, particularly self-efficacy or capability beliefs and context beliefs. The second concerns barriers faculty encounter in relation to internationalization endeavors. The sample for the study consisted of fifteen (N=15) faculty drawn from four departments that make up the college of education, human services, and health professions at State University. There were two basic eligibility criteria for the study: First, faculty must have been involved in internationalization activities not explicitly recognized and rewarded in the evaluative process for tenure and promotion. These include, inter alia, adding intercultural and global perspectives into the curriculum, developing and/or leading study abroad programs, and building international partnerships. Second, faculty had to be tenure-seeking or recently tenured; recently tenured associate professors had to have been involved in internationalization during their pre-tenure careers. I used Patton's (2002) purposeful sampling approach to select the first few respondents and identified additional respondents through snow-ball sampling. Of the fifteen respondents, eight were recently tenured associate professors and seven were tenure-seeking assistant professors.

The primary source of data for the study was in-depth semi-structed interviews (Merriam, 2009; Rubin & Rubin, 2005), each of which lasted approximately one hour and half in length and was audio-recorded. I transcribed each interview and analyzed the data using the constant comparative method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Coding was accomplished using the two-step analytic framework proposed by Charmaz (2014). Line-by-line coding, as the name suggests, requires a line by line review of the data and assigning tentative codes to sections of text.

Focused coding is more selective and "more conceptual" and involves re-coding the data using "the most significant and/or frequent earlier codes to sift through and analyze large amounts of data" (p. 138). Applying this framework, I synthesized the data and constructed themes that address the research questions.

Findings

The study yielded findings that suggest implications for both policy and practice. These findings are organized according to the major areas that comprehend the focus of the study namely perceptions about self-efficacy, the social environment (institutional context) for international engagement and the barriers faculty encounter in this regard.

Knowledge and Competencies for International Engagement

In response to questions about self-efficacy, participants indicated that international engagement often involves working with multiple groups of stakeholders often with different perspectives and agendas and, as a result, strong interpersonal skills, particularly leadership and communication skills, are imperative for success. Recalling his experience establishing international partnerships, Allen emphasized the ability "to navigate the politics and the personalities" involved and to (re)frame the direction of discussions in pursuit of desired goals. To be effective, he offered, faculty ought to be adept at assessing group dynamics and making "tactical decisions" regarding which ideas to support. This strategy, in Allen's view, may at times require "putting your idea on the back burner" and supporting other priorities "to gain the trust" of the stakeholders before (re)introducing your initiative for discussion: "You have to be skillful and diplomatic [and] you have to be collegial with others as politics is a big part of the enterprise," he added. Similarly, John postulated about the need for faculty to be "decisive" particularly in study abroad situations: "You have to be the decision maker for the group [and] you have to make decisions based off of your experience and your best judgment." Perhaps unsurprisingly, cultural responsiveness emerged as an important component in activities with international dimensions. Rachel aptly summed up the perspectives of her colleagues in this regard when she discussed the importance of being cognizant of culture-based differences especially when offering critical feedback in international and/or intercultural settings. That is, although direct and critical feedback may be commonly acceptable, even valued in Western cultures, expectations might be different in non-Western cultures, which typically value and emphasize diplomatic approaches to criticism.

Further, respondents highlighted the importance of organizational knowledge and problem-solving skills, particularly in the face of differences in governance and structures of education systems in different countries. Broadly speaking, the federal government in the United States lacks direct authority over the higher education system as this oversight resides instead with the states (Alexander, 2000), resulting in varied regulations and, in effect, several "systems" of higher education. The corollary then is that institutions of higher education in the United States generally enjoy greater autonomy as decision-making is less bureaucratic. By contrast, the oversight of public education in many countries is typically centralized with policy and leadership decisions cascading down from a central ministry of education to institutions. This bureaucratic hierarchy and its concomitants pose idiosyncratic challenges for international endeavors. As Mary, who does "a lot of work in parts of Asia," recalled, "Getting people to sign things after some of their growing up experiences is difficult -- you could get in trouble over there for signing things." Joy similarly concurred and related her experience involving a collaborative partnership between State University and another institution in one of the Baltic states:

> It was very complicated. all the institutions of higher education are governed by the central government … there were a lot of layers … [and] then other things came into play, like political issues -- there [were] just lots of different things.

In short, strong interpersonal skills form an important part of the faculty's repertoire for involvement in activities with international dimensions.

Faculty also described several dispositions which they deemed essential to accomplishing goals related to international engagement. The commonly mentioned dispositions in this regard include open-mindedness, patience, humility, and ability to tolerate ambiguity. For instance, John emphasized the values of open-mindedness and patience, especially with new approaches and processes as international endeavors may involve "working with people who have been taught to do things differently." To John, open-mindedness involves an ability and willingness to make "deliberate efforts to see things from other peoples' perspectives … rather than

insisting that everyone see things from my [own] perspective." Dan was succinct in expressing this point: "There's people who believe the only way to do things is their way and they go over everything almost like a religious experience trying to convert people and it doesn't work."

Another disposition that participants often talked about was humility, which Joy observed, involves "learning from others [as] sometimes you learn more from just listening than trying to dictate how things are done." She added, "you need to be someone who can navigate intricate cultural differences, not trying to fix it when it is not broken." Dan echoed this perspective noting that faculty going overseas ought to be humble enough "to look people in the eye and with authenticity and say, 'I am here to teach but I am also here to learn.'" For Austin, humility or "socio-cultural awareness," as he put it, is important because "you are walking into a place with some expertise [but] you are not the expert of that context." Lastly, respondents felt that a certain degree of tolerance of ambiguity is important for effective engagement in international contexts as cultural differences inevitably produce "moments of uncertainty and confusion" (Mary).

Institutional Context

This section focuses on the social dimension of international engagement; specifically, faculty perceptions regarding institutional responsiveness (rewards) and collegial support for internationalization endeavors (Blackburn & Lawrence, 1995; Ford, 1992). An important point to recall here is that the process of review for tenure and promotion is tiered and flows according to an established hierarchy, with the originating department offering the first-level of review whilst the provost renders a final decision (O'Meara et al., 2008; Stohl, 2007). Mindful of this tiered evaluative process, the present study inquired into faculty perceptions of institutional support for internationalization both at the college level and at the home departmental level.

The overarching perception among respondents was that the college-level leadership structure, comprising of the dean and the pertinent advisory committee, supported faculty international activities. This support was evident in the dean's letters of recommendation to the provost in tenure and promotion reviews. Ben's comments illustrate this point: Although "I was really questioned about my international engagement initiatives at the departmental level," the dean supported and "highlighted my internationalization work in his letter to the provost – [he] certainly is very supportive and that makes a huge difference." This perception of a positive context of support is noteworthy and raises pressing questions for probationary faculty given that guidelines for tenure and promotion at State University do not formally offer recognition and rewards for international activities. Considering the prevailing faculty reward system, it is unsurprising that some felt that the college and the university supported internationalization "for more of a practical reason" specifically growing "enrollment [for international students] which in turn is going to help our bottom line" (Isabell).

In contrast to the overall positive context of organizational responsiveness at the college-level, respondents articulated mixed perceptions of institutional support at departmental levels, with some expressing positive beliefs while others felt that support for internationalization within their departments was nonexistent. The common theme weaving respondent perspectives together was the lack of criteria for recognizing and rewarding faculty international activities in tenure and promotion decisions. In this regard, Austin spoke about the lack of what he described as "proactive support" for internationalization saying, "They are supportive in that they are allowing me to do the work -- but are they supportive in a proactive way beyond that? No."

By contrast, Rachel perceived a positive context of organizational support for internationalization within her department, noting that her department head was "excited to hear about [Rachel's] international engagement initiatives" and was supportive of those efforts. Likewise, both Luke and Lily described positive contexts within their departments and program areas. Luke, for example, stated that "even though it is not explicitly written in the [faculty] handbook, I do feel that the department is very supportive of [internationalization] efforts." Of note, both Luke and Lily belong to the same program where deliberate and systematic efforts were underway to internationalize the curriculum partly in response to market forces. As Lily observed, the Child, Family, and Education Studies program is "increasingly inundated with requests from students [mainly] from Saudi Arabia who are really interested in learning about individuals and families [across the lifespan]" and to bring back that knowledge to their countries. These comments suggest that the faculty in the Child, Family, and Education Studies program share a common vision regarding the priorities and future directions of their program.

The second dimension of contextual beliefs relates to collegiality and as previously discussed, collegial relationships among faculty are important to consider in relation to faculty behavior (Blackburn & Lawrence,

1995). That is, collegial relationships likely foster a supportive environment and a culture of collaboration whereas the converse holds in non-collegial settings. In the present study, most of the respondents expressed positive perceptions of social support for internationalization activities. Luke, who teaches in the Child, Family, and Education Studies program, explained that colleagues who were in some instances also "working on the same issues trying to internationalize their course content" represented an informal "network of support." He further suggested that his colleagues help "keep me going as I know I am not the only one -- we believe in this need for our students to leave our program with a [broader] understanding of the world." Lily, who teaches in the same program as Luke concurred and described her colleagues as "incredibly supportive" of internationalization:

> I don't feel like it is something that only a couple of people are doing. I feel like almost everybody, with few exceptions, is signed on, signed up 100 percent behind the effort so this isn't something that we just talk about in the hallways. It is something we talk about as a group.

Still, some participants expressed uncertainty in relation to perceptions of collegial support within their departments. While they did not experience or discern direct antipathy toward international engagement, perceived messages from some departmental colleagues were clear that they did not value or were simply lethargic toward internationalization. "There are those tenured faculty members who have been doing the same thing for twenty years and they don't want to change it," Isabell asserted. "Some just stay out of it," Joy added. John perceived a lack of meaningful support from some of his colleagues in relation to his study abroad initiatives: "The response was typically well, that's probably not going to happen [or] give it a shot, but good luck getting students to follow you [or] good luck getting support." Although these comments convey a sense of apathy which faculty may confront from colleagues uninterested in incorporating international and global dimensions into the curriculum, it is important to recall that professional lethargy is widespread in the academy and is not specific to internationalization. Austin succinctly summed up his own attitude towards colleagues' commitments: "Generally, people really just don't care -- unless it is somebody you are working with all the time and to be fair, that's how I feel when I hear about their agendas."

The existence of communities of shared interests among engaged faculty is worth noting. Analysis showed that these communities offer a sense of affinity and faculty benefit from these networks in a variety of ways, perhaps the foremost of which relates to exchanging ideas. In this regard, Alice spoke about seeking out her colleagues for consultation and guidance when she decided to add a study abroad experience to her course. "When I am faced with challenges, I know I am not alone [and] knowing that there is support out there is very helpful to me," she observed. Furthermore, respondents described the Center for Outreach, housed within the college, as a valuable resource and catalyst for international endeavors. "The conversation starts there …I go talk with [the director] about an idea and she has a ton of [other] ideas" (Mary). Dan similarly views the director of the Center as a "conductor of an orchestra [who] helps put the jig-saw puzzle together" for faculty as it relates to internationalization initiatives. All told, the Center offers faculty support for the full scope of activities related to internationalization; from building itineraries for international delegations (partnerships) to professional development opportunities to providing advisement to students (including assistance with passport and visa applications). In this regard, Mary observed that the Center has the overall responsibility of "getting [students] ready for international travel."

Barriers to Faculty Engagement in Internationalization

Analysis showed that faculty involved in activities with international dimensions encounter a variety of constraints, the most pressing of which was the lack of recognition and rewards in the evaluative process for tenure and promotion. Participants felt that discussions about internationalization were pervasive throughout State University as manifested by efforts to position and market the institution as a "global university" and a "destination of choice" for international students. There is "a palpable push in the college and the university for student experiences abroad" Luke remarked, adding, there's "definitely a carrot out there." Alice, too, felt that there were "visible efforts" to enhance the international profile of State University and this "shift to international is top down [and] it is quite evident." However, the rhetoric concerning international engagement has not culminated in changes to policies governing tenure and promotion to provide recognition and rewards for faculty international activities outside of publications. This lack of credit towards tenure poses an obvious, if veritable, deterrent particularly for probationary faculty, because "everything is supposed to count towards tenure and promotion" (Valerie). "My biggest worry," Alice shared, "is work, work, work and it doesn't count" for much in the review process for tenure "and that is a problem for me."

This lack of a framework for offering recognition and academic credit for international activities implies that the assessment of faculty work in this area is open to interpretation. As Joy pointed out, "If you have reviewers [for tenure] who have no interest in internationalization work, who don't understand what it means, *who don't see it in the handbook, and who give it no value*, interpretation can be quite subjective" [Emphasis added]. Joy further explained that the reward system places a strong emphasis on "a quantity of things that we can 'count' and international engagement may not contribute to that quantity." Betty, too, shared the view that despite the proliferation of the rhetoric about internationalization, she remained uncertain concerning how engagement in it "is measured or evaluated."

> No one evaluates us [based] on whether we are integrating internationalization into the curriculum and so while it is important, and I think it is meaningful … it is harder to prioritize [it]. It is talked about a lot, we keep hearing it is important, but I do not know how that is translated into action, I am not sure it counts towards tenure.

In summary, the expectations for faculty achievement in teaching and service, and the relative weights assigned to these categories, are nominal. Thus, it is unsurprising that some questioned State University's commitment to internationalization: "I think the university wants to think that it is internationally engaged, but I think so much of it is in name only," (Isabell).

In addition to structural constraints, the data revealed that internationalization endeavors levy substantial time commitments on the faculty. To be sure, coordinating the logistics of a study abroad program takes time and the actual experience takes an additional, even greater commitment of time. "There are a lot of pieces that have to come together to make [it] work," Isabell asserted. The fact that study abroad mostly takes place during the summer "when [the] majority of the faculty supposedly do the writing," further constrains participation, as Mary observed: "Sixteen days I was abroad, the week before I was preparing and the week after I needed to recover -- If I do not get a publication out of that, that is one month gone…" John echoed this perspective and talked about the additional "personal involvement" that study abroad levies on the part of the faculty:

> The students are your responsibility twenty-four hours a day for two or three weeks and that takes a lot of psychological energy, stress on the part of the faculty. If I am driving around with them and we are in an accident or if they get malaria or anything else, it is my responsibility to have to take care of them so that is high strain. On campus I would see them for seventy-five minutes in a day and then they are on their own and if they go get in a car wreck, heaven forbid, that is not my responsibility if they are outside of class.

A clearer picture thus emerges as to why probationary faculty who typically are cramped for time struggle to fit internationalization endeavors into their scholarship.

The finding that insufficient funding impedes faculty engagement in internationalization was not entirely unexpected. Even so, analysis revealed interesting insights, as some respondents perceived inconsistencies whereby State University's support for international activities varied according to criteria that did not necessarily relate to student learning. Specifically, some felt that support for the more traditional and more viable study abroad destinations (i.e., Western Europe) was robust and readily available compared to experiences to nontraditional, novel destinations. "They treat those programs differently," John remarked, a sentiment that was echoed by Frank:

> This university at this time only wants relationships that bring them money -- if it doesn't generate tuition dollars, don't talk to me about it... The focus is on China and Turkey because they are source markets for international students.

Furthermore, developing a new study abroad program may require travel to the destination prior to the actual experience to develop a focused curriculum that ensures a high-quality educational experience for students, as Allen explained:

> It is not a question of saying [to students], "I don't have that much information [about the destination] other than I think you need to have a passport." Before you have a study abroad, you need to go [to destination] and develop the program. My own effective way of putting a [program] together is for me to go to the destination before the students and [determine] what I want them to see.

In short, given the scarcity of resources, some faculty indicated that they supplemented the limited funding available with personal resources while traveling to conduct university-related business.

Recalcitrance on the part of faculty and students emerged as another obstacle to internationalization endeavors. Participants' comments suggest that this recalcitrance is attributable to two factors. First, State University draws a large portion of its student body from the surrounding region and insofar as these students conceivably are place-bound, they may not perceive international experiences as beneficial or even relevant to their future careers, thus culminating in modest participation rates in international education. Second, participants spoke about the political realities within academic departments and the distinctive barriers they present particularly for probationary faculty. Obviously, senior colleagues can influence the direction of one's career in profound ways and Isabell's excerpt offers a sense of the conundrum untenured faculty leading the internationalization agenda may encounter:

> Well, realistically what I am doing with internationalizing the curriculum for the program takes a lot of coordination, and a lot of organization, but on the other side there's a lot of people who don't want to do this and something that I am really struggling with are those senior faculty members who don't want to be engaged, who are resistors -- I am untenured, I don't want to tell tenured faculty what to do because we all know that there is a hierarchy of faculty and it is a very fine political line that you have to walk in that role.

The above discussion supports the widely held belief that probationary faculty often trade a delicate path navigating the inherent political dynamics within their departments, where cultivating collegial relationships, especially with senior faculty who may not value internationalization, becomes imperative.

The data also showed that the stipulations of professional accrediting organizations and/or licensure requirements in some majors constrain faculty flexibility to add to the curriculum outcomes that address intercultural and global perspectives. Some respondents indicated that curricula in their majors are highly structured with the result being tightly prescribed course content and course sequence, leaving little room for review and revision. "Everything is so prescribed, and every class is a required class [which makes] it difficult to make a case why we should care about infusing international content," Ben who teaches in the physical education program posited. Betty took a similar view and explained:

> I think NCATE who accredits us for special education and then we have ASHA who accredits us for speech pathology -- I think they are all interested in diversity and internationalization, but there is not a requirement for a course on you know cultural diversity or internationalization or anything like that.

While some faculty in the study felt that highly structured curricula in their disciplines leaves little flexibility to incorporate international and global perspectives, it is important note that not all majors have professional accreditation and/or licensure requirements.

Lastly, three respondents spoke about the difficulty of balancing family responsibilities with activities that require international travel. That is, absence creates strain in the family as pertinent tasks are farmed out to spouses who are subsequently compelled to allocate time and effort to accommodate the additional responsibilities. "You know it is a big sacrifice, I love [study abroad], but I am leaving my wife and my kids behind and she's got to pull double duty while I am gone" John stated. "Your absence is going to be felt because it means somebody has to step in to take your role [while] you are gone" Allen concurred, adding "somebody has to drop kids off to school and to all the other activities and somebody has to go pick them up and so on..." Although comments about family responsibilities surfaced only a few times in the data set, these concerns could be indicative of underlying constraints to international engagement, especially for female faculty who typically are primary caregivers in society. Overall, the foregoing discussion offers a glimpse of the barriers that faculty encounter in relation to involvement in international activities.

Discussion

Although internationalization is not a new concept to higher education in the United States, discussions about increasing international engagement have grown exponentially over the past few decades. The Commission on the Abraham Lincoln Study Abroad Fellowship Program's (2005) call for the United States to "send at least one million undergraduates abroad annually …" (p 4) provides important context in this regard. Of the various stakeholders, faculty play a critical role in higher education's international dimension (Stohl, 20017; Hudzik,

2011). Even so, little attention has been given to the pertinent personal agency beliefs that support faculty international engagement. To address this limitation in the literature, this study investigated faculty agentic perspectives that bear on decisions of international involvement. Overall, the study posits that strong efficacy beliefs and positive perceptions about institutional context exert a powerful influence on faculty engagement in activities with international dimensions. While this study concerns itself with faculty engagement in internationalization, its findings must be viewed in the broader context of the scholarship of engagement (Boyer 1990; 1996).

Human agency, Sen (1985) reminds us, refers to "what the person is free to do and achieve in pursuit of whatever goals or values he or she regards as important" (p. 203). In the present study, faculty agentic perspectives entail capability beliefs (self-efficacy) and context beliefs relative to internationalization. Further, judgements about the social environment span perceptions of institutional support (rewards) and collegial support for one's work (Blackburn & Lawrence, 1995; Ford, 1992). Analysis revealed positive perceptions of institutional support for international activities at the college level. In addition to perceived support from the dean and the faculty advisory committee, faculty described the Center for Outreach as a valuable resource and catalyst for international endeavors. In this regard, the Center plays an important albeit symbolic role in communicating the importance of international engagement to the college and specifically the faculty. As noted previously, the Center offers faculty a range of supports including facilitating professional development and offering a common space where faculty engage colleagues, share knowledge relating to pedagogy, or simply find a sense of community. These results corroborate existing research showing that structured opportunities foster a sense of community and provide a means through which faculty learn from colleagues (Darby & Newman, 2014; Niehaus & Williams, 2016).

However, fault lines emerged with respect to perceptions of institutional support for internationalization at departmental levels, with some participants reporting positive perceptions while others described negative perceptions. This outcome was not surprising considering that State University lacks overarching criteria codifying faculty international activities within tenure and promotion guidelines. Broadly speaking, this finding comports with Colbeck and Weaver (2008) who found that faculty involved in public scholarship reported both positive and negative perceptions of institutional support. Even so, the discrepancy in perceptions of institutional support between the college and its departments suggests interesting implications, especially for probationary faculty. Stohl (2007) aptly posits that support for a candidate's work within their home department is critical to achieving success in the tenure and promotion process. Thus, pre-tenure faculty concerned about whether international activities fulfill criteria for "legitimate" scholarship choose to stay away from involvement.

Perceptions of collegiality are an important element to consider in relation to faculty work (Blackburn & Lawrence, 1995). Accordingly, one extrapolates that favorable relationships among faculty colleagues are likely to foster a culture of collaboration and an overall positive working environment, which ultimately influences faculty engagement in the program and the institution. Indeed, faculty in the Child, Family, and Education Studies program reported positive perceptions of collegiality in their program and department. Internationalization, prompted by the influx of international students, seems to have emerged as a unifying focus for the program and all faculty are committed to ensuring a more integrated curriculum infused with global perspectives. Even so, faculty representing other programs in the study related mixed perceptions of collegial support for international activities. In the light of the foregoing, one infers that subcultures within a college or department influence faculty views regarding collegiality.

Concerning perceived self-efficacy for international engagement, faculty readily articulated the capabilities (strong interpersonal skills) and dispositions they deemed essential for success. These comments about perceived strengths tended to focus more on aspects of cross-cultural communication -- a finding can be explained, at least in part, by the fact that the majority were involved in cross-border education activities. These findings corroborate other studies demonstrating the importance of interpersonal skills in faculty scholarly endeavors (e.g., Colbeck & Weaver, 2008). Further, and much as in Colbeck and Weaver (2008), faculty struggled to respond to questions about perceived areas of improvement. One might attribute this recalcitrance to the general notion that such discussions likely elicit discomfort.

Accomplishing comprehensive internationalization hinges upon increased participation of the campus community, of which faculty play prominent role (e.g., Raby, 2007). Even so, faculty in this study described several barriers to involvement in internationalization endeavors. As previously noted, the reward structure at State University does not include recognition and rewards for international activities, which leaves faculty work in this area open to broad and subjective interpretation in the review process for tenure and promotion. While

faculty may feel efficacious, it is not surprising that lack of recognition and rewards along with the time commitment international activities levy on the faculty emerged as the foremost deterrents to participation, a finding that corroborates existing studies (e.g., Beatty, 2013; Childress, 2010; Dewey & Duff, 2009; Ellingboe, 1998; Friesen, 2013; Siaya & Hayward, 2003; Stohl, 2007).

Although the notion that inadequate funding impedes faculty international engagement confirms previous research (Beatty, 2013; Childress, 2010; Dewey & Duff, 2009; Ellingboe, 1998; Green, 2003, 2007), perceptions of inconsistent support for different internationalization endeavors were thought provoking. As previously noted, some felt that State University accords more resources and more visibility to programs destined for Western Europe where the university has established strong partnerships or programs that have the potential to cultivate new revenue streams (i.e., international students). Broadly construed, this finding supports research suggesting that economic rationales are a major driver of internationalization initiatives in higher education (Altbach, 2016; Croom, 2012; Stromquist, 2007).

Despite dedicated efforts to promote international experiences as rich and educationally meaningful options, a large portion of the student body at State University elects to not participate. At the broadest level, this finding corroborates Darby and Newman (2014) who found that uncommitted students and unsupportive colleagues deter faculty use of service-learning. Still, to begin to understand what underlies this apparent student apathy, one must consider an institution's larger context. Specifically, a regional institution, such as State University, draws most of their students from surrounding areas, many of whom conceivably intend to remain in the region upon completion of their studies. In the light of this dynamic, many may not view international experiences as relevant or beneficial to their career plans, culminating in lower participation rates. The data also revealed concerns about the political dimension of leading internationalization endeavors, particularly for probationary faculty. Certainly, probationary faculty exert limited influence within their departments and more importantly, their academic future rests, to a large degree, with departmental colleagues (Stohl, 2007) some of whom may be recalcitrant about international engagement. Isabell's comment, "It is a very fine political line to walk," provides clear perspective concerning the challenge probationary faculty face in this regard.

The purpose of this investigation was to understand and describe faculty personal agency beliefs for international engagement. On the whole, the data suggest a complex portrait regarding the role of personal agency beliefs in facilitating faculty involvement in activities with international dimensions. Even so, perceived self-competence and favorable perceptions about the social environment (context) emerged as imperative to faculty involvement in internationalization endeavors.

Limitations

This exploratory investigation drew participants from a single college at a large public research university and, as a result, its' findings are not generalizable to other contexts. Moreover, the data presented here were collected from individuals who self-selected to participate in the study. Accordingly, further research is warranted to more fully comprehend the role of personal agency beliefs in faculty international engagement. In addition, future research should investigate whether gender differences exist in relation to perceptions of collegiality. Lastly, Peskin (1988) reminds us to consider and address the issue of researcher bias, particularly in qualitative studies. The present study used member-checks and peer debriefing strategies to safeguard the validity and reliability of the research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 2009).

Note

The author received no financial support for the research, authorship and/or publication of this article.

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Author Information

Josiah Zachary Nyangau
Louisiana State University
336 Thomas Boyd Hall, 70803
Baton Rouge, LA
USA
Contact e-mail: *jnyangau@kent.edu*