

International Students' Motivation to Study Abroad – “Why Are You Studying at Hungarian University?”

Daria Borodina

Eötvös Loránd University, Faculty of Education and Psychology

Abstract

The Bologna Process facilitates students and staff mobility among 48 countries to bring more coherence to Higher Education systems across Europe (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2020). A great number of higher education institutions develop study abroad programs to attract more international students but there is a systematic difference between students participating in such programs and who are not (Mitchell, 2021), hence it is significantly important to get to know about international students' motivation to study abroad. This study examines international students' motivation using the two-factor model of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation proposed by the self-determination theory (SDT) of human motivation.

The questionnaire was administered to 100 international students, 46 males and 54 females, aged 19 to 37 to explore motivation to attend Hungarian university. The results of the study show that respondents endorsed more items on intrinsic motivation, than on extrinsic motivation. There is a significant difference in motivation among bachelor, master, and doctorate students. Master students demonstrate a higher level of Stimulation, External, and Identified regulation comparing to bachelor and doctorate students. International students experience high-quality motivation – intrinsic motivation during studying at Hungarian university, perceive themselves to be acting with a sense of autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Existing literature on international education mostly has focused on the skills and benefits students gain, but there has been limited research on international students' motivation. At the same time, knowledge about international students' motivation can be used in the program support and development which fits more to the motivational characteristics of international students.

Keywords: higher education; international students; mobility; motivation; self-determination theory.