

Chapter 13

Value Co-Creation in Faculty-Led Study Abroad Programs: A Service-Dominant Logic Approach

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ABSTRACT

Study Abroad (SA) education has become an increasingly important educational program for teaching global learning and intercultural competence, maturity, and sensitivity of students. Since the price tag attached to SA programs can be daunting, the question arises how value can be defined and, more importantly, how value is created. Some scholars have used the principles of service-dominant logic proposed by Vargo and Lusch (2004) to suggest that students should be engaged as an active co-creator of the university experience. Utilizing a qualitative research approach this chapter proposes that the value process of SA programs consists of three stages: (1) value proposition and potential; (2) resource integration and value co-creation; and (3) value realization evaluation. This study identifies key roles of the participants and their operand and operant resources that guide the value co-creation process. The framework provides faculty with a way to understand, adapt, and manage resource integration and influence students' SA value realization processes.

INTRODUCTION

Higher Education (HE) continues to undergo significant changes worldwide, confronted by challenges to contain costs while simultaneously improving student outcomes or increasing productivity (Rathee & Rajain, 2013). One element of initiatives taken has been the emergence of Study Abroad (SA) programs, evidenced by HE Institutions (HEIs) and educational policy makers substantially incentivizing SA participation (Salisbury, 2011). In the 2011/2012 academic year, over 280,000 US students studied abroad for academic credit (NAFSA, 2014) tripling in number over the past two decades (IIE, 2014). Correspondingly, the number of scholarly papers on the subject has increased more than 300% in the past decade (Cubillos & Ilvento, 2013). Such studies have found SA activities to yield strong influences on

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students' development of global and intercultural outcomes (Stebbleton et al., 2013, p. 4). For example, Braskamp et al. (2009, p. 101) noted that 'education abroad has become an increasingly important educational program (experience) in global learning and development, intercultural competence, intercultural maturity, and intercultural sensitivity of students'.

More recently, Díaz-Méndez and Gummesson (2012, p. 576) argued 'value that students expect and actually obtain from HE is a result of the conjunction between lecturers' teaching quality and their learning capabilities'. A student-lecturer relationship thus 'requires being approached from a value co-creation perspective'. In the context of studying abroad, students are often introduced to the host country both via side trips and through their own adventurousness (Gray et al., 2002; Simpson & Pham, 2006). Assuming that students immerse themselves physically, emotionally and mentally in their host culture they co-create their learning experience, which has a direct influence on learning outcomes, program satisfaction and positive word-of-mouth. Thus, viewing SA courses through the lens of co-creation, as implied by Ford and Bowen (2008), may have important implications for the design and management of these SA programs since the faculty member involved has to identify and organize value-creating activities. To date, however, little is understood about the nature of perceived value in HE, how it is created and the mechanisms for enhancing perceived value (Bowden & D'Alessandro, 2011).

The purpose of this chapter is to contribute to the 'Marketing' education and SA literature by exploring the 'value creation' process for students participating in faculty-led study-abroad programs. Drawing upon service-dominant logic (Vargo & Lusch, 2004, 2008), the concept of working consumers (Cova & Dalli, 2009) and SA theory, the author develops a framework that identifies roles and resources of SA participants and demonstrates the process of value co-creation during the stages of planning and preparation, cultural immersion and re-entry. Similar to Pongsakornrungrasit and Schroeder (2009) who posed two questions to understand how consumers collectively co-create value, this chapter aims to address the following research questions:

1. *What are roles of participants (i.e., faculty and students) within the value creation process?*
2. *How does value co-creation take place in faculty-led SA programs?*

While students' options for studying abroad can take different forms, from semester and year-long programs to short-term, two- to four-week intensive study tours, the focus in this chapter is limited only to short-term faculty-led study-abroad (SA) programs as an active-learning method. In line with Simpson and Pham (2007) who noted that semester-long programs do not necessarily involve an active learning component since students attend courses at another institution.

This chapter is organized as follows. The next section provides a brief discussion of literature associated with value co-creation in HE and SA theory. An exploratory qualitative study is described involving focus group interviews with undergraduate SA students and reflection papers of MBA SA students. Based on the data the author develops a framework of value co-creation in the context of faculty-led short-term SA programs. Specifically, this chapter identifies how faculty and students act as resource integrator. Furthermore, the results suggest unique student and faculty roles during the value collaboration process. Finally, this chapter concludes with a discussion of limitations and future research opportunities.

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