

Chapter 3

Designing Short-Term, Faculty-Led Study Abroad Programs: A Value Co-Creation Framework

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ABSTRACT

Study abroad education has become an increasingly important educational program for teaching global learning and intercultural competence, maturity, and sensitivity of students. However, tuition costs of study abroad tours can be daunting. Thus, the question arises how value can be defined and, more importantly, how value is created. This chapter adopts the lens of service-dominant logic (SDL) and value co-creation to suggest that students should be engaged as an active co-creator of their study abroad experience. Based on focus groups and an analysis of student reflection papers, this chapter proposes that the value process of short-term, faculty-led study abroad tours consists of three stages: (1) value proposition and potential, (2) resource integration and value co-creation, and (3) assessment of value realization. The framework provides faculty with a way to understand, adapt, and manage the resource integration and influence students' perceptions of their study abroad experience.

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INTRODUCTION

Over the last decade, student mobility and study abroad programs have become an increasingly important topic in higher education (HE). Universities worldwide promote learning abroad as part of their internationalization agenda that aims to help students enhance personal growth, intercultural competence, global outlooks, and employability (Gribble & Tran, 2016). The annual ‘Open Doors’ survey finds that study abroad participation has steadily increased over the last decade (IIE, 2018). In 2016/17, over 332,000 US students studied abroad for academic credit (IIE, 2018), compared to 283,000 in 2011/12 (Redden, 2013). And according to the International Consultants for Education and Fairs (ICEF) approximately five million tertiary students were studying abroad in 2016, an increase of 67% since 2005 (International Research and Analysis Unit, 2016).

International student mobility can be divided broadly into two categories: (1) degree mobility, i.e., students seeking fully degrees in foreign countries and (2) intra-degree student mobility or learning abroad i.e., students include an international learning experience as part of their domestically delivered degree (Gribble & Tran, 2016). Furthermore, learning 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 programs which are defined as one to eight-weeks in duration (Gaia, 2015). Semester-long programs do not involve necessarily an active learning component since students attend courses at another institution (Simpson & Pham, 2007), whereas short-term study abroad tours, as course components, provide educators with opportunities to achieve holistic education (Ritz, 2011).

Research shows that study abroad is related to students’ development of global and intercultural competencies, self-knowledge and self-management, and increased academic performance and graduation rates (Gaia, 2015; Rowan-Kenyon & Niehaus, 2011; Stebleton et al., 2013). However, despite the growing popularity of shorter study abroad tours, little is known about how students make meaning of study abroad experiences (Rowan-Kenyon & Niehaus, 2011) and the mechanisms for enhancing their perceived value. Díaz-Méndez & Gummesson (2012) argue that ‘value that students expect and actually obtain (...) is a result of the conjunction between lecturers’ teaching quality and their learning capabilities’ (p. 576). The authors further note that a student-lecturer relationship ‘requires being approached from a value co-creation perspective’ (p. 576).

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

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