

EXPLORING LEADERSHIP LEARNING THROUGH SHORT-TERM STUDY ABROAD EXPERIENCES

Abstract

Pre COVID-19 there were a growing number of opportunities for study abroad across higher education in the United States, (Rosch & Haber-Curran, 2013; Martinez, 2012). This paper aims to examine phenomena surrounding outcomes of student abroad experiences while centering students' leadership learning. Centering leadership learning as a framework, findings indicate participants in the study grew in the of areas of leadership efficacy and capacity through the short-term study abroad.

Introduction

Within higher education, there are several outlets for students to expand upon their knowledge and experiences. In particular, study abroad programs are attractive opportunities for global perspectives and can be used as vehicles to strengthen cultural competence and intercultural knowledge (Hulstrand, 2006; Montgomery & Arensdorf, 2012; Watson et al., 2013). Furthermore, most institutions offer global programs in a variety of contexts, whether its semester-long, week-long, or a few months. No matter the format, study abroad opportunities are integral to the college experience, with to over 64 percent of U.S. college campuses prioritizing global and international learning outcomes in their mission (ACE, 2011). It is imperative to understand the impact of study abroad on students' learning outcomes, efficacy, and identities.

Assessing learning is essential to the goals and mission of postsecondary education. Further, higher education institutions are committed to the

development of future leaders of society. Executing effective leadership pedagogies and hands-on learning is essential for leadership learning outcomes (Guthrie & Bertrand Jones, 2012; Meixner & Rosch, 2011). Leadership education researchers have examined transformational leadership learning strategies that include study abroad, problem-based learning, peer education, service-learning, critical reflection, and contemplative practices (Guthrie & Jenkins, 2018; Meixner & Rosch, 2011; Rosch & Haber-Curran, 2013). Using evidence-based leadership teaching approaches that are student-centered is critical for learners to develop leadership identities and capacities (Andenoro et al., 2013; Bertrand Jones et al., 2016; Seemiller, 2014).

This qualitative study utilizes interview techniques to explore undergraduate leadership learning and identity development through the construction of leadership efficacy and capacity as a result of enrolling in a short-term study abroad program in Stockholm, Sweden. This research is significant because study

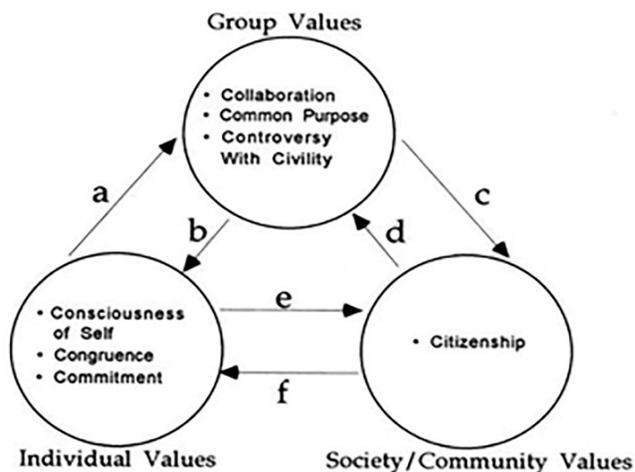
abroad programs offer an opportunity to grow in the areas of leadership identity, efficacy, and capacity. Despite continued growth among leadership education scholarship, limited empirical work has been conducted on study abroad and its influence leadership learning (Carlson, 2018). Through larger study abroad discourse on student learning outcomes and the alignment with leadership skills development, this relationship should be researched.

Educators and administrators should strive to better understand how students apply their international experiences abroad after returning to help foster student learning and leadership development. This development can support students' ability to thrive beyond their college experiences (Carlson, 2018; Montgomery & Arensdorf, 2012). Further, there is a need to study the impacts of study abroad on leadership learning due to the limited amount of scholarship that exists (Carlson, 2018; Rosch & Haber-Curran, 2013). Thus, the impetus for this qualitative research is to examine how study abroad can help facilitate deeper leadership learning in regard to leadership identity development and the formation of leadership capacity and efficacy. As such, this paper will outline the research purpose, relevant leadership learning literature, the study's design and methods, the findings and discussion, with emphasis on leadership capacity and efficacy development, and implications for future practice for leadership educators to consider in their work. We aim to provide additional avenues for engaging high-impact practices such as study abroad in order to better facilitate leadership learning through leader efficacy, and capacity development.

Research Purpose and Questions

This constructivist study aims to examine phenomena and meaning surrounding outcomes of student abroad experiences while centering students' leadership learning (Guthrie & Jenkins, 2018). With this theoretical concept, we strive to better

understand the larger developmental leadership impacts of studying abroad. This research provides a



purposeful lens into how students define and narrate their reflections of a study abroad experience and how that applies to their reality as a college student, their leadership identity and capacity building, as well as development of leader efficacy. Further, the study intends to offer implications for practice with intention around aligning curriculum and learning that prioritizes leadership identity development and the need to foster student leadership learning experiences abroad.

This study adds to the existing literature on leadership learning as well as study abroad experiences of United States college students and provides a framework to utilize when designing leadership study abroad programs in the future. With the current political climate and consistent scrutiny of postsecondary institution's purpose, higher education constituents must continue to provide empirical evidence of how students benefit from co-curricular involvements in order to strengthen design and objectives (Watson, et al., 2013; Thompson et al., 2018). This study adds to existing conversations in a variety of areas including how students benefit from traveling abroad and co-curricular programs, as well as developing global leadership perspectives and leadership capacities. Faculty must provide evidence to support the necessity of international leadership perspectives and

work to make study abroad experiences accessible to all students (Lederman, 2007; Pederson, 2009; Trooboff et al., 2008). With this purpose in mind, the following overarching research question guides this study: How is student leadership learning influenced by students' study abroad experience?

Literature Review

Existing literature on study abroad experiences, student benefits, and personal development is vast and expansive (Rosch & Haber-Curran, 2013; Martinez, 2012; Montgomery & Arensdorf, 2012; Pederson, 2009). While many studies examine cultural competencies, there is a wide array of effects from student travel outside of the United States (Gasman et al., 2015; Watson et al., 2013). The larger study abroad conversation is consistently centered on the increase in cultural competency of students, however there is a lack of knowledge that investigates the interactions of study abroad with leadership education and more specifically, student leadership learning. This literature review examines broader study abroad outcomes as a foundation for understanding the limitations of research surrounding leadership learning study abroad experiences and their influence on leadership identity formation of college students.

Impact of Study Abroad. A large body of research continues to solidify our understanding of the impacts of study abroad experiences. Study abroad is one vehicle to transform the student experience (Doyle et al., 2010; Hulstrand, 2006; Watson et al., 2013). Study abroad opportunities serve as high impact, experiential learning that incorporates global perspectives, diversity, and immersion in different cultures (Kuh, 2008). It is evident through previous research, that study abroad research implies a significant increase in intercultural sensitivity, knowledge, and competence (Bennett, 2004; Anderson et al., 2006; Martinez, 2012; Pederson, 2009). Moreover, study abroad has the capacity to

cultivate culturally relevant leadership development and capacities of college students (Bertrand Jones et al., 2016; Rosch & Haber-Curran, 2013; Martinez, 2012). While there are many benefits of studying abroad, we focus on the development of intercultural knowledge and the relation to student leadership development.

Development of Intercultural Knowledge. One goal of students sojourning internationally is increased knowledge of global perspectives and intercultural knowledge (Bennett, 2004; ACE, 2011). Bennett (2008) defines intercultural knowledge and competence as a set of skills (learning, behavioral, etc.) and aspects that support transformative exchanges in a variety of cultural contexts. Short-term study abroad research posits several positive indicators of intercultural knowledge including intercultural competence, awareness, understandings, skills, and behaviors (Martinez, 2012; Reichard & Walker, 2016)

Pederson (2009) identified that more importantly than intercultural knowledge, is the facilitation of meaning-making around cultural competency. Students must continually reflect on their study abroad experience to develop increased levels of intercultural sensitivity (Bennett, 2004). Furthermore, an outcome of critical reflection and deepened levels of intercultural sensitivity is increased self-efficacy, identity, and cultural competency, which are critical developments in leadership capacity (Bennett, 2008; Montgomery & Arensdorf, 2012; Reichard & Walker, 2016).

Study Abroad, Reflection, and Student Leadership Learning. Over the past 10 years, there has been an increase in global leadership study abroad opportunities across the US (Rosch & Haber-Curran, 2013). Study abroad experiences which focus on leadership, support students in developing a more comprehensive worldview (Carlson, 2018; Montgomery & Arensdorf, 2012; Sroufe et al., 2015). Further, global leadership study abroad experiences

help students see leadership examples outside of western perspectives and help progress leadership education in US higher education (Sroufe et al., 2015). More specifically, short-term study abroad experiences provide accessible ways to engage students in global leadership (Martinez, 2012), thus increasing leadership skills such as global mindedness, motivation, and intercultural perspectives (Carlson, 2018; Rosch & Haber-Curran, 2013).

Since global leadership study abroad experiences support the leadership identity of students, there is benefit to transformative learning through personal reflection and paired site visits during the trip (Rosch & Haber-Curran, 2013). A critical aspect of student leadership development and learning is critical reflection and meaning making (Guthrie & Jenkins, 2018). Educators - specifically leadership educators - must adjust approaches to intercultural student learning based on cultural contexts in order to enhance knowledge (Bertrand Jones et al., 2016), which can be achieved through critical reflection during and after sojourning. The preceding section discusses a framework for undergraduate students engaged in leadership learning that centers leadership identity, which encompasses the development of leadership capacity, and efficacy in the leadership process.

Theoretical Framework: Leadership Learning Model

Exploring how leadership learning influences individuals involves a deeper understanding of leadership and the leadership learning process. It is important to recognize what experiences shape leaders, how experiences shape them, and why particular experiences are influential. Leadership learning influences three internal aspects of a leader: identity, capacity, and efficacy (Guthrie et al., 2013). Identity is who a person believes they are. Identity constantly evolves and changes. It is socially constructed, complex, and multifaceted. Race, class, and gender are parts of one's identity, as is their

leader identity. Leadership identity is who a person believes they are as a leader (Guthrie et al., 2013). Further, leadership identity motivates students to engage in pursuing leader capacity and efficacy.

Capacity is the assimilation of a student's leadership comprehension, stances, and skills, and represents students' capability to participate in the leadership process (Guthrie et al., 2013). According to Dugan et al. (2013), high-impact experiences, such as on- and off-campus leadership positions, sociocultural conversations with peers, community service, mentoring, and membership in off-campus organizations, contribute to constructing capacity. Efficacy is one's belief in their ability. Leader efficacy is a student's confidence in their capability to lead. Bandura (1997) identified four items that influence efficacy: (a) mastery experiences, (b) vicarious experiences, (c) verbal persuasion, and (d) emotional cues. It is critical to understand how leadership learning shapes leadership identity, capacity, and efficacy. Self-efficacy is defined as individual's perception capability or an individual belief that one can complete an action and find a desired result (Bandura, 1997). Study abroad research indicates that programs impact students' self-efficacy in areas such as communication language fluency, and cultural adaptability (Covert, 2014; Cubillos & Ilvento, 2013). Petersdotter and colleagues (2017) found that students participating in a study abroad program had increases in overall self-efficacy compared to those that did not sojourn.

In the case of self-efficacy, it is important to consider student levels of competence prior to sojourning in addition to their return (Kehl, 2015). Additionally, Anderson et al. (2006) found that students completing a short-term study abroad indicated increased levels of diversity preparedness on their college campus. Subsequently, when students experience global diversity, their cultural adaptability increases (Covert, 2014; Cubillos & Ilvento, 2013) and can be applied beyond the experience to thrive in other environments.

Methodology

Qualitative inquiry guides this study to examine the depth and meaning of student study abroad experiences (Chase, 2018; Merriam, 2009). Furthermore, the researchers grounded the study in constructivist approach to gain a deep understanding of the participants lived experiences based on international contexts (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). As such, we engaged semi-structured focus group interviewing techniques at the end of a month-long study abroad trip. Semi-structured focus group interviews include open-ended questions designed to collect multiple aspects and deeper reflection of the participant's experience (Fontana, 2002). The premise of this type of focus group interviewing is to seek a deeper reflection and knowledge of the lived experiences of participants (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

Researcher Subjectivity. Informed interviews are a distinctive “personal relationship” between the interviewer and interviewees (Fontana, 2002, p. 165). The interviewee becomes involved in the interview process as a member rather than an “us and them” perspective. These focus group interviews provide an outlet for intentional examination of those meanings through processing the student study abroad experiences with students. As such, we critically examined their roles as educators during the study abroad trip and their role as an interviewer in this research, these dual positions necessitated a reflection of power dynamics between the participants, the study, and the study abroad program. We tried to minimize power dynamics by waiting until the end of the study abroad experience and asking a volunteer to read the recruitment script without their presence. Because of the personal relationship with the participants, we chose to name this power dynamic before the focus groups and address the purpose of the study with participants to highlight the critical nature of their narratives and experiences to further meanings of global study abroad programs.

Global Leadership Study Abroad Program Participants. We explored the narratives of 17 United States study abroad students participating in a month-long global leadership study abroad in Stockholm, Sweden. The participants included 14 women (82.3%), three men (17.6%), and three students of color (17.6%). Additionally, five were first-year students (29.4%), five sophomores (29.4%), four juniors (23.5%), and three seniors (17.6%). Age of students ranged from 18 to 26 years old.

Student participants elected to study abroad in the months of May and June as part of a global leadership study abroad program in Stockholm, Sweden situated in a leadership studies program at a large, public, four-year university in the Midwest of the United States. Students enrolled in six credit hours during the month-long trip, led by two faculty co-directors. The first course – Special Topics in Leadership: Global Leadership Perspectives – and the second course – Women and Leadership.

Data Collection. At the end of the study abroad experience, the faculty co-directors recruited students for this study through verbal communication after the culmination of their coursework. To avoid coercion, the faculty members asked a representative to read the recruitment call verbally. Students opted into one of two focus groups and provided consent in accordance with university institutional review board procedures. Each researcher conducted a one-hour audio-recorded focus group with the students and utilized semi-structured interview protocol developed by the researchers (Figure 1). The focus group interview questions were informed by the leadership learning model. The model aimed to scaffold focus group questions using leadership efficacy and capacity focused reflection. The framework assisted in building a reflective space in relation to how the global experience built their skills and capacity to see themselves as a global leader. The questions aim to explore how study abroad experiences that center on leadership learning are influenced by

three internal aspects of the leader and leadership process: identity, capacity, and efficacy (Guthrie et al., 2013). After the group returned to the United States, the audio-recordings were transcribed verbatim by an undergraduate research assistant.

Figure 1

Focus Group Interview Questions

1. Tell me about yourself.
2. Tell me why you decided to study abroad and when? How did you begin to think of yourself as a person who could study abroad?
3. What were your expectations of the study abroad before you embarked – meaning, what kind of experience were you expecting to have?
4. How have your actual experiences differed from the experiences you were expecting to have?
5. Tell me what you liked most about the experience?
 - a. What about meeting with people different than you?
 - b. Understanding culture?
 - c. Getting outside of your comfort zone?
6. Tell me what you struggled with most about the experience?
 - a. What about meeting with people different than you?
 - b. Understanding culture?
 - c. Getting outside of your comfort zone?
7. How would you define a global leader? Where does that definition come from?
8. What's your philosophy of leadership and has it changed as a result of studying abroad? If so, how?
9. How have you changed as a result of this experience? What do you think about the study abroad experience contributed to that change?
10. Is there anything else you would like to add?

Data Analysis. The primary investigators elected to code transcriptions through an initial open coding process to establish themes among the narratives (Merriam, 2009; Zhang & Wildemuth, 2005). The open coding process yielded 4 emergent themes across the data. The investigators agreed to code each other's transcripts to address intercoder reliability and found these themes nested in the larger category of leadership identity. As a secondary coding stage, the researchers utilized the leadership learning framework (Guthrie et al., 2013) to employ a directed content analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005) while analyzing data and entering themes in a master codebook. "The goal of a directed approach to content analysis is to validate or extend conceptually a theoretical framework or theory" (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1281). In other words, exploring how students continued to build their capacity and efficacy after sojourning lent itself to utilize theory as a framework to analyze the data. We consulted and agreed upon each researcher's themes within the master codebook, identified quotations that illustrated thematic categories, and the interpretation of those. Finally, we confirmed the two most prevalent themes within the larger category of leadership identity were capacity and efficacy for leadership.

Trustworthiness. Creswell and Miller (2000) outlined using multiple trustworthiness strategies in qualitative research. Three strategies were used in this study: (a) member checking; (b) peer debriefing; and (c) a rich, thick description. For member checking, focus group participants were provided opportunities to review transcripts from their focus group interview to ensure accuracy and validity in the data (Merriam, 2009). Members of the research team came together to agree upon codes, themes, and examined the data analysis process. The final strategy used to establish trustworthiness was including rich, thick descriptions of each of the undergraduate focus group participants' experiences and understanding of how they learned and engaged in leadership through the short-term study abroad opportunity (Merriam, 2009). A rich, thick description provides a

level of detail that allows readers to decide the level of transferability to another setting.

Findings

Engaging in the leadership process is rooted in one's leadership identity, which includes capacity, and efficacy (Guthrie et al., 2016). The leadership process center's leadership identity as being socially constructed and grounded in historical, political, and cultural forces (Guthrie et al., 2016). The global leadership study abroad experience saw the strongest growth in students' leadership capacity and efficacy, as part of their overall leadership identity development. The findings are organized around these two growth areas of leadership learning in order to highlight key themes in student learning and identity development as a result of students participating in this short-term faculty-led study abroad program.

Leadership Capacity. Capacity is the integration of students' knowledge, attitudes, and skills, collectively reflecting their overall ability to behave effectively in the leadership process (Dugan, 2011). Student-faculty interaction can enhance students' academic performance, personal development, and professional development (Kuh & Hu, 2001). However, the type of interaction seems to be critical (Cole, 2007, 2010; Lundberg & Schreiner, 2004; Schreiner et al., 2011). For example, interactions focused on remediation or personal critique do not contribute in a positive manner to student's building their leadership capacity and efficacy. Student-faculty interaction contributed significantly to building leader capacity in all students, indicating that the more students interact with faculty, the greater their level of engagement in learning, investment of effort in academics, satisfaction with life, and optimism about the future, regardless of the type of student and their life circumstances (Schreiner et al., 2011).

For the students in this study participating in a faculty-led study abroad, they highlighted the role of faculty impacting their capacity for learning and leadership while abroad. Allison describes her decision-making process to enroll in a short-term study abroad program versus a full semester:

Well personally, I didn't know if I would be able to do a full semester. That was just kind of daunting to think about. Going and being away for that long somewhere that I had never been before that I didn't know if I would like. And being not with people who are also kind of going through the same thing. That was a big aspect of this trip. That we were all gonna be taking classes together and like in English with people that I had known already and faculty from our campus. That was kind of a big thing for me.

Further, capacity is related to engaged learning because learners are encouraged to apply knowledge and critical thinking concepts to their leadership experiences. Through the short-term study abroad coursework, students made meaningful connections of material and to real-life experiences. Fawn describes this type of engaged learning while abroad in Sweden:

I think something that I really liked was meeting (with) different political parties. In America, you hear - Bernie is a socialist. You hear all these things and you think super negative thoughts especially someone like me. I'm not super educated with politics. I know there's a left and a right, but I don't know a whole lot about it. So, hearing how negatively socialism is taken in America type thing. Coming over here, I hear, oh they use socialism, oh they're democratic, like oh it's so awful. There are all these different parties. They're not extremists, they're not nuts, they're normal humans. I thought that was really good, because we don't get that unbiased look in things. It was nice to get a clear view.

Fawn learns to engage information that she once believed and discerns how to apply what she is experiencing on the trip with her beliefs. She is engaging learning with the process of application and critical thought in order to build her capacity for learning new things and engaging in learning that

might not align with her personal beliefs or ideology.

Leader Efficacy. Efficacy is the expectation of success in specific activities; the belief that you can “organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments” (Bandura, 1977, p. 3). Efficacy can center the concept of a growth mindset (Dweck, 2006), that perceives human behavior as malleable with effort. Thus, students’ interest in making a difference in others’ lives and appreciating what others have to offer may enable them to gain the full benefit of their own belief in themselves through their college experience while being open to diverse experiences that pushes them outside of their comfort zone. Char and Melissa, two participants, highlighted this in their study abroad experience of being in and learning about a new culture that pushed them out of their comfort zones:

I would have to say that my definition of a global leader is somebody who deliberately puts themselves in situations where they're going to be exposed to other cultures and other types of people other than themselves in order to be able to relate better to the countries other than their own. For example, the president, he deliberately puts himself in situations like within the UN and he goes to other countries [to engage with people different than him].

Char exhibits efficacy as someone that appreciates being exposed to other cultures, and someone that is able to relate to members of other countries, which then build his beliefs that he can engage in the leadership process. Melissa indicates similar experiences:

I just see as a way, you know, for global leaders, somebody whose ideas can reach across cultural boundaries. So I think that in like the case of ethically or morally correct global leader, the cultural competency can be used in a good way where you are using it to bring people to together for a greater good. But I think also on the flip side... I think there have been a ton of global leaders who have – whose ideas have reached across global boundaries and they have used that cultural competency in a way that separates people which is kind of counterproductive....So I guess that's

my definition. Is like using...you have an idea and believing in that idea; you have a goal.

Melissa is deeply invested in understanding the process of leadership by applying global leaders' abilities to be ethical and build cultural competency, she also sees examples of how she can build her on efficacy.

Sojourning abroad lends itself to opportunity for expanding world views and social connection among cultures. Social connectedness is the understanding of interpersonal relationships (Ryff, 1989). Schreiner et al. (2011) posits, "service learning, community outreach, or study abroad programs are examples of existing venues with great potential for impacting thriving by addressing the factors of diverse citizenship and social connectedness." (p. 18). These engagement opportunities are also a way to support building students' efficacy for leadership. Our data underlines this statement as we found students to have expressed increased social connectedness and building their efficacy. Char's quote illustrates social connectedness through the study abroad program:

The part I liked the most was probably actually getting out and doing things like going and meeting people like I wouldn't necessarily have put myself in a place to meet if I were in the US. Like the political groups, I would probably not have actually gone and talked to them if it was just me. But yeah, I really enjoyed getting out and meeting people.

The study abroad program intentionally builds relationships with the participants as well as the community members in the immersed culture. Char insists on her hesitation to cultivate those relationships in the United States, however after the study abroad, she sees the value in doing so and doing so builds her own leadership efficacy.

Furthermore, Brooke also mentions the importance of leadership and interpersonal connections on the trip and beyond.

I think I've learned a lot about myself as well. And kind of figured out that you really need to get to know the

people you're leading. Like understand the differences in personalities. That's how like kind of being on this trip and being surrounded with seventeen different people with different personalities. You need to learn how to kind of adapt to be able to communicate effectively with different people.

Brooke reflects on how interpersonal relationships not only apply to leadership but how the trip has influenced her communication and interactions with other. Her consciousness spills over into her definition of effective relationships as a leader and student.

Discussion

Powerful experiences are created through short-term study abroad academic opportunities (Rosch & Haber-Curran, 2013; Martinez, 2012). The relatively cost-effective advantage of short-term study abroad programs is an additional benefit to highlight for students to learn about leadership in a global context (Martinez, 2012). While research on short-term study abroad programs and interests in their application for leadership education and curriculum development is rising, we highlight the role the leadership learning process can have in students understanding and engaging in leadership through study abroad. As Reichard and Walker (2016) stated, identity, capacity, and efficacy are interconnected and motivate students to engage in the leadership process. As students engage in leadership, they enhance their leadership identity, capacity, and efficacy—further motivating more engagement in leadership processes (Guthrie et al., 2016).

Through qualitative methods and content analysis, the findings suggest that over the course of 4-weeks, students grew the most in their understandings of their own leadership identity development which was situated in capacity and efficacy. The students felt a connection to peers in their group, experiencing similar feelings on the trip as well as a connection with many of the Swedish citizens, either organized

through visits or in informal meetings. Their leadership capacity and efficacy while on the trip and after, supports their ability to thrive in multiple environments through developing a framework for how relationships develop across individuals either globally or locally.

Historically, study abroad studies have highlighted the improved self-efficacy as ongoing positive outcomes of undergraduate study abroad experiences (Byrnes et al., 2004; Metzger, 2006; Petersdotter et al., 2017). One way all students in the study increased their self-efficacy is through engaged learning. While this is not a new concept, it affirms the reality of study abroad programs' impact on how students thrive from involvement in cultural activities and global education. More than 90% of the students in the study described some type of building their capacity through engaged learning, many discussing the accessibility of faculty and work with non-profits agencies in global settings as well as the interactions with local residents. These findings support previous research on intercultural knowledge and sensitivity and self-efficacy (Anderson et al., 2006; Cubillos & Ilvento, 2013; Kehl, 2015; Milstein, 2005; Montgomery & Arensdorf, 2012; Pederson, 2009). These factors are products of engage learning abroad and how students make-meaning of their experience through feelings of efficacy and competence in international settings.

An anticipated outcome of study abroad is often that students will broaden their self-efficacy. The students in this study found greater ways of thriving in their environments when they embraced global leadership capacities and found value in putting themselves in situations that challenged their viewpoints. Almost all the students in the study defined global leaders as individuals that reached across boundaries and worked to better the lives of people from an international context. Leadership efficacy supports the work of Cubillos & Ilvento, (2013) and their indicators of global mindedness and work on developing students as members of a global community.

Finally, one positive outcome related to identity development and self-efficacy is the ability to increase leadership efficacy through meaningful interactions with others. Students shared how they were expected to explore, in part, on their own within a community where many did not primarily speak or read the language (Swedish). Students in the study often placed their abroad experience as an additional step within the context of stepping outside their "comfort zone", which is a theme evident in non-leadership-focused study abroad experiences as well (Rosch & Haber-Curran, 2013). For example, multiple students commented on how they often thought of themselves as "leaders" but were forced to take on "follower" roles when placed in the unfamiliar environment of a new country; learning how to independently navigate such an environment led them to generalize how they could apply such learning to numerous unfamiliar situations in the future, thus drawing upon leadership efficacy.

Future Considerations for Research and Practice

This research is vital to understanding the meaning students make of global leadership study abroad experiences. It will contribute to multiple fields and the understanding of how leadership education and study abroad experiences affect student's capacity for leadership and learning process. This knowledge will inform student learning outcomes and understandings of global leadership development.

The program highlighted in this study could serve as a template for other institutions interested in creating international partnerships to support and grow students' leadership learning. Findings from this leadership study abroad program reflect the importance of providing ample opportunities for students to immerse themselves in a global context- both formally and informally. Additionally, the findings suggest intentionally pairing curricular components with field experiences to support students engaging with faculty, understanding difference, and connecting to their host country.

This study has several implications for reflective assignments and supported leadership growth. We recommend that while abroad, faculty provide intentional goals for the overall study abroad programs in addition to courses students will enroll in during the trip. Connecting the goals and increasing reflection activities increases engaged leadership learning and self-efficacy for students. Additionally, it is important to scaffold study abroad trips with reflection of expectations, intention around programmatic activities, and preface social justice topics while in an international context to enhance leadership learning purpose and capacity. Furthermore, program directors should prepare pre-departure meetings to reflect on expectations and introduce socially just topics discussed on the trips as well as implementing a final reflective debriefing with students upon the commencement of the trip. This best practice aims to aide in leadership identity development, efficacy, and capacity building. Finally, faculty should incorporate increased and adequate informal opportunities for students to reflect on program topics and experiences while abroad. Students need a space to process and make-meaning of concepts and their personal reflections of international activities outside of the classroom.

Future research should consider examining similar facets in long-term study abroad excursions as well as include a longitudinal analysis of how students thrive after returning to campus and several years

in their professional career. This study explored the narratives of students adjourning on a one-month study abroad experience and was limited in duration of time students had after the excursion to make-meaning of their experiences. Furthermore, the creation of the self-knowledge may have been limited due to the lack of time to apply the concepts from the courses abroad. Given time to general self-meaning of their experiences, students engaged in global diversity, increase their cultural adaptability (Covert, 2014; Cubillos & Ilvento, 2013) and build leader capacity and efficacy (Guthrie et al., 2013). Our study indicates the underpinnings of this, but future research can explore self-authorship of knowledge and leadership learning and action thereafter sojourning.

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