

**Bridging the Global and Experiential Learning Needs in Sport Management Education: An examination of Short-Term Sport Management Study Abroad Program.**

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The concepts of "experiential learning" and "global education" would resonate with almost all of existing sport management programs throughout the globe today. They are what the practitioners and academicians alike identify as the indispensable needs-areas for the development of future sport managers. In order to truly appreciate the values of nurturing field-exposed and globally-oriented professionals, one does not need to look further than the current state of cheerless global economy. The notion of single national economy no longer stands and domino effect in the context of global economic dependence is an understatement. Sport industry is no exception when it comes to relying on global resources - financial, human, and market – in its attempt to sustain, expand and prosper. It is for this undeniably interwoven nature of global sport business of today that necessitates sport management programs around the world to review, design, and implement global and experiential learning modules in an expedited fashion. Experiential learning models in sport management education have seen its share of growth in the last few years through increased number of internships, practica, and research projects (Southall et al., 2003).

From John Dewey (1938), the founding father of experiential learning theory, to Hubbs & Brand (2005), the benefits of utilizing and incorporating personal experiences as resourceful means of achieving effective learning have been widely researched. Building upon Dewey's theory, Kolb (1984) supported the notion of active and experiential learning and highlighted "the reflective process as a necessary part of engaging the learner." (p.67). Kolb further posited the four-stage of experiential learning: (a) concrete experience, (b) reflective observation, (c) abstract conceptualization, and (d) active application (Hubbs & Brand, 2005). In the sport management context, however, previous research on experiential learning is confined to a minimal number. Prior to the research presented by Southall et al. (2003) on the metadiscrete experiential learning model, Parkhouse (2001) has shed some light on two types of experiential learning models – nondiscrete and discrete – in a sport management textbook. Southall et al. (2003) later on introduced the concept of metadiscrete learning model in sport where the authors contend that "a metadiscrete practicum can produce a learner capable of gaining additional theoretical and practical knowledge because in a metadiscrete practicum experience, the role of teacher and practitioner are not separate and distinct, but are dual aspects of the same function" (p.31). The width and depth of previous research on experiential learning in the sport management field are by no means exhaustive, but the topic warrants an on-going discussion and research which is an encouraging sign.

Although the rationale for scholarly research on the benefits, values, and implications of global education has been unquestioned, the global education opportunities offered by less than a handful of sport management programs have been limited at best. Benefits of completing study abroad program for college students have been well documented over the years. Lenz & Wister (2008) has identified self-reflection and self-revelation as key discoveries from their students' reflection papers and introduced three dominating patterns – "(1) getting to know the self, (2) friends make the foreign safe and familiar, and (3) processing of large amount of cultural, cross-cultural, and psychological information beneath the surface" (Lenz & Wister, p.85). In addition, Curran (2007) promotes study abroad programs for attaining practical skill-sets, such as a global mindedness, cross-cultural understanding, and linguistic proficiency, which one can acquire if institutional expectations and standards are serious and stringent. Needless to say, one can benefit from successful study abroad program in more ways than just character-building.

Then, why do we not see more implementation of global education programs in sport management discipline? With careful planning and meticulous execution, it seems that a study abroad program can potentially fulfill two important, contemporary curricular needs of sport management programs. The purpose of this paper is to examine the recent completion of Global Immersion Study Abroad Korea course which was offered to 11 graduate students at a West-Coast, private Jesuit university in January, 2009. By employing triangulation techniques and multiple sources of data, such as pre and post-trip surveys, interviews, observations, and journaling methods, the author aims to discover how and why a short-term global education program with emphasis on experiential learning could enhance the learning experiences of sport management graduate students. In the process, the study looks at the applicability of Kolb's four-stage experiential learning model in the sport management context and other previously-researched benefits for the students. The presentation should also be able to disseminate invaluable and practical knowledge on planning, organizing, and executing a short-term study abroad program to those academicians who have been interested in a like program but never have had step-by-step mentoring on crystallizing the idea. Study abroad is certainly not a novel idea. However, utilizing a short-term study abroad course for the purpose of catering to the growing needs of global and experiential learning in the sport management education can be viewed as a strategic and innovative concept.