

On the Effect of College Students' Overseas Experiences on their Global Leadership Ability

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Abstract

The present research intends to identify how college students' experience abroad would affect their global leadership ability. College students' preference for experiences in foreign countries has recently been increasing and expanding. A group of 209 students attending at D University in Seoul and N University in Cheonan were selected as the subjects for the survey of their experiences abroad in the form of a short-term training, voluntary service, educational program or any other travels. For statistical test of the collected data, a one-way ANOVA and the post hoc test of Scheffe method were used. It was found that college students' experiences abroad had a significant effect on their global leadership capability. Thus, it is advisory that colleges should enhance opportunities and support for students' overseas experiences to cultivate such core abilities as global leadership.

Keywords: *Overseas experiences, Global leadership capability, Core capability colleges' support*

1. Introduction

Colleges in the current knowledge-based society conduct a variety of education and training programs to produce talented manpower that can play their roles to contribute to the development of society. Such efforts of colleges, based on their founding spirits, emphasize the importance of acquisition of practical knowledge and focus on enhancement of students' social abilities. Thus, colleges are now required to perform dual functions: vocational and professional training leading students to society as well as their intrinsic function of the ivory tower.

In order to meet these expectations, colleges try to identify core capabilities demanded by society and arrange multi-dimensional programs. However, despite such a change in college education, have difficulty in making systematic preparation for their entry into real world, perhaps because of lack of education of career search and establishment of ego identity at secondary schools. Thus, it is not easy for college students to face the extremely competitive job market, which requires very high qualifications and capabilities. This situation might, in turn, lead them to a serious vicious cycle of worry, anxiety and degenerated will and target consciousness.

Still, however, many college students desire to have a variety of overseas experiences including voluntary service and educational programs. This trend has increasingly led many

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students to go abroad for a set of different types of experience including backpacking, community service, cultural exchange, and internship for temporary stay for a week to 6 months. [6]

In the present era of globalization or internationalization, colleges make every effort to produce talented people with globality demanded by society [3][8]. Expanded support from colleges with various kinds of resources along with much longer vacations between semesters and a more autonomous curriculum at colleges combine to offer a wider spectrum of overseas programs. Also, many students try to arrange their own itineraries on an individual level as well as global programs of their schools [10].

It is true that an individual's command of foreign languages and his or her long-term stay abroad will be considered as an important qualification and help find employment. The present research intends to test the adoptable hypothesis that even a short-term stay abroad might influence college students' global leadership capacity in the current trend of internationalization and multiculturalism.

Future studies are expected to help secure systematic and practical education and quality training to enhance college students' core capabilities demanded by society. We should not simply recognize the importance of these abilities and discuss theoretical issues.

2. Theoretical background

2.1. Experience abroad and global leadership ability

Ever since the beginning of a new millennium, colleges have expanded opportunities for voluntary service programs in foreign countries. Although these programs might vary from college to college in terms of the detailed contents, they all have something in common: the goal of improving students' global leadership capability. This common feature might be seen in the procedure of screening applicants and the constituents of each program. Korea College Education Association (2012) stated that such experiences as voluntary service abroad are now a very important part of college education, since they would provide students with opportunities for self-improvement and maturity as well as international mindset. There seems to be an agreement, thus, that colleges should emphasize the educational aspect of overseas experiences and offer a wider variety of global programs [3][9].

D. Kim(2011) emphasized a couple of elements for global leadership ability: globally thinking and cultural literacy that enables one to recognize cultural diversity and to understand and interpret a different culture. He also concluded that global leadership is closely related with having interest in the world and also overseas experience [4].

Thus, various overseas experiences are an important part of college education. But, it is also true that such experiences should be encouraged, since they would help any individual widen their insights and worldview.

2.2. Experience abroad and global leadership ability

Global leadership refers to one's ability to actively deal with human behavior and organizational structure of the ever-changing world, to understand other countries political, economic and social issues in the global context, and to draw mutual cooperation of people all over the world to solve such problems [5][10].

As mentioned above, it is necessary that colleges should prepare systematic and concrete plans to help students enhance their global leadership ability. As an actual organization

preparing students to enter into the real world, it is mandatory that colleges should play their role thoroughly.

3. Research method

This research aims to identify how college students' overseas experiences influence their global leadership ability.

3.1. Subjects of research

The subjects of this research were a group of 209 college students who were taking classes like Career Search, Leadership and Educational Psychology at D University located in Seoul and N University in Cheonan. From the students registered for these classes, sophomore, junior and seniors were selected as subjects and they were asked to answer the questions on their experiences abroad. The survey items included short-term visits of partner foreign institutions, voluntary service activities, cultural experiences, internship and traveling as well as test questions on their global leadership ability. The general characteristics of the subjects are illustrated in [Table 1].

Table 1. Research Procedure and Contents (Number, %)

	Gender		Year			Fields					
	M	F	2	3	4	Huma nities	Natural Sciences	Social Sciences	Health- related	Welfare	Total
N	118 (56.5)	91 (43.5)	85 (40.7)	71 (34.0)	52 (24.9)	59 (28.2)	39 (18.7)	27 (12.9)	43 (20.6)	17 (8.1)	209 (100)

3.2. Research tools and analysis methods

For the research tool, we adopted Y. Song's (2010) scale for global leadership capability. The tool consists of five subfactors and 18 measurement items: global mind, open mind for diversity, global networking, performance improvement skills, and basic attitude capability. The survey questions were answered with a self-report on a five-point Likert scale. A higher score meant a higher leadership capability [11]

The tactical analysis of the collected data was done with SPSS 18.0. A frequency analysis was performed to analyze the characteristics of the subjects. Also, a one-way analysis of variance and Scheffe's post hoc test method were used for statistical verification.

4. Research results

A one-way ANOVA analysis was conducted to identify the effect of college students' overseas experiences on their cultural empathy ability. The results of the analysis are as follows.

4.1. Frequency test of the groups classified by their overseas experiences

Table 2. Mean and standard deviation of the classified groups

Ability	Groups	N	M	SD
Global Leadership Empathy	A (0)	67	2.88	.400
	B (1-2)	87	2.96	.518
	C (3-4)	28	3.43	.454
	D (5~)	27	3.46	.636
	Total	209	3.06	.541

The subjects were classified into four groups according to the number of occasions of their overseas experiences. [Table 2] shows each group’s mean and standard deviation of the students’ global leadership ability. It was found that Group A (with no overseas experience) marked the mean of 2.88 with .400 SD. As for Group B, the mean and standard deviation were obtained at 2.96 and .518, respectively. The figures for Group C were 3.43 and .454, while Group D recorded 3.46 and .636, respectively.

4.2. ANOVA analysis of global leadership ability of the groups

Table 3. ANOVA analysis of global leadership ability of the groups

Group	SS	df	MS	F	P
Inter-groups	11.190	3	3.730	15.373	.000****
Intragroup	49.741	205	.243		
Total	60.931	208			

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$

It was found, as shown in [Table 3], that varying degree of the subjects’ overseas experiences resulted in a statistically significant difference in their global leadership ability $F=15.373, p < .000$

4.3. Scheffe’s test of global leadership ability of the groups

Table 4. Multiple comparison of global leadership ability of the groups (Scheffe)

(I) Group	(J) Group	M. D (I-J)	P	Scheffé
Group A	Group B	-.078	.813	a < c, a < d
	Group C	-.550*	.000	
	Group D	-.578*	.000	
Group B	Group A	-.078	.813	b < c, b < d
	Group C	-.472*	.000	
	Group D	-.500*	.000	
Group C	Group A	.550	.000	c > b c < d
	Group B	.472*	.000	
	Group D	-.028*	.998	
Group D	Group A	.578*	.000	d > a, d > b
	Group B	.500*	.000	
	Group C	.028	.998	

* $p < .05$

[Table 4] shows whether there is a significant difference between groups. There was a significant difference in global leadership ability between Group A, on one hand, and Groups B, C, and D, on the other hand ($p < .05$), while no significant difference was found between Group A and B. Still, a significant difference was found between Group B and Groups C and D ($p < .05$)

Also, it was found that a significant difference was shown between Group C and Group D ($p < .05$) In sum, we might conclude that college students 'overseas experiences affect their global leadership ability.

5. Concluding remarks

The present research aimed to identify the effect of college students' overseas experience on their global leadership ability. It was found that the level or degree of college students' overseas experiences had a significant effect on their global leadership ability. It is natural that more experience should lead to greater global leadership ability.

Colleges in the modern society are required by society to produce talented manpower equipped with capabilities and responsibility as global citizens as well as professional knowledge. Education of global citizenship has become a core part of college education. In reality, most of the global programs for overseas experience or voluntary service supported by colleges are for a short-term stay.

Still, even a short-term program for overseas experiences can help each student get interested in global issues, acquire related information and, furthermore, enhance his or her global leadership ability [7]. Thus, colleges must make sure that their global programs for overseas experience should not turn out simple events or pro forma programs. Every effort should be made to improve the quality of such programs and increase their actual and educational effect.

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