

STATE FFA OFFICERS' AUTOPHOTOGRAPHY OF LEADERSHIP COMPETENCY DEVELOPMENT DURING A SHORT-TERM STUDY ABROAD



SCAN ME TO VIEW PARTICIPANT PHOTO SUBMISSIONS, ABSTRACT, & REFERENCES



Hunter J. Carson, Newlin A. Humphrey, Dr. Bradley M. Coleman, Dr. Lauren Lewis Cline

01. INTRODUCTION

Purpose

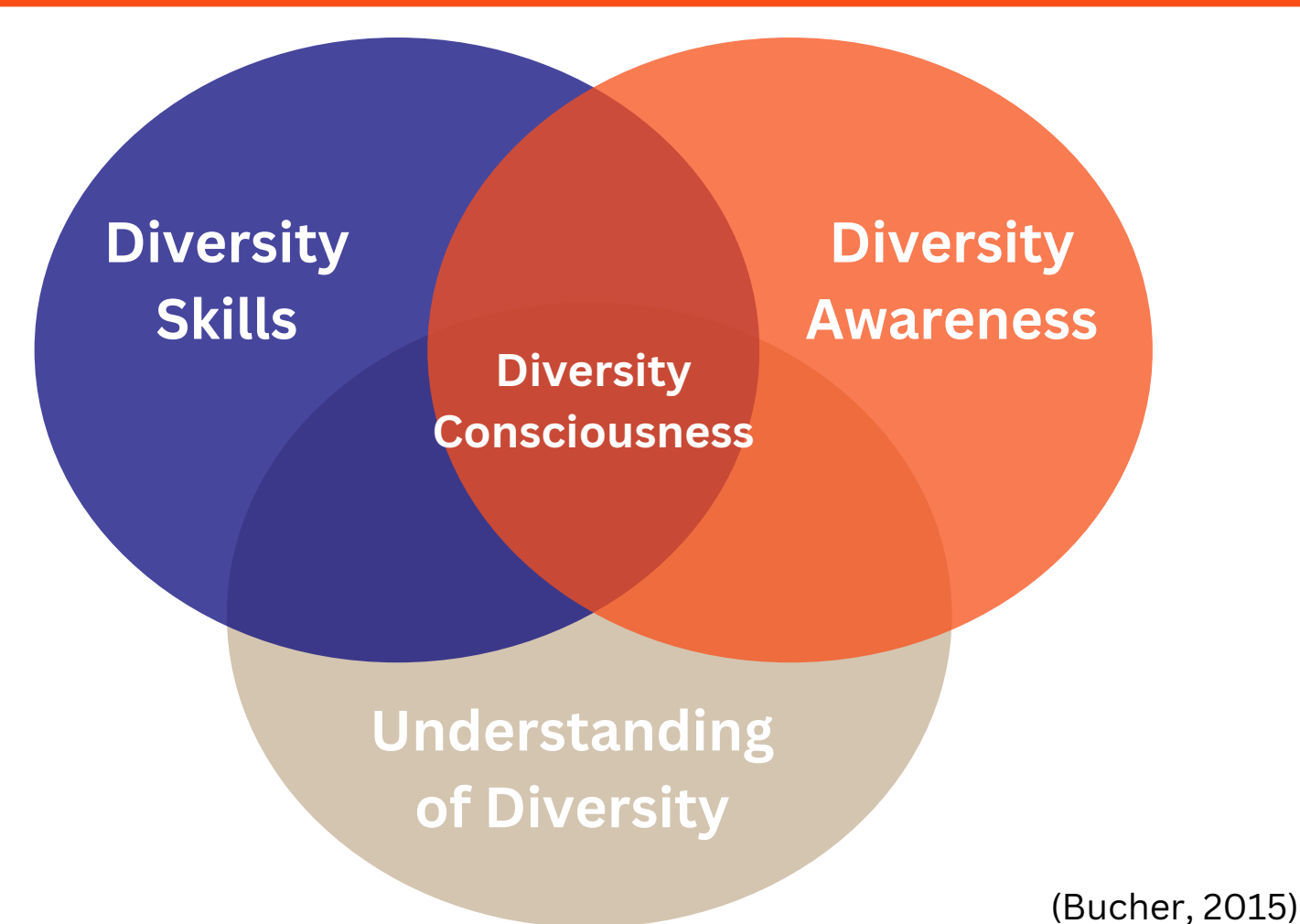
- The purpose of this study was to explore perceived leadership competencies developed by participants of an STSA experience in Costa Rica.

Background

- Growing need for leadership competency development within domestic and global contexts to ensure complex issues are properly managed in the agriculture industry (Deardorff, 2006; Quirk, 2018).
- Study abroad programs allow students to view practical application, gain industry knowledge, develop cultural competence, and experience identity development (Cheng, 2013; Huffman et al., 2020).
- National FFA Organization International Leadership Seminar for State Officers (ILSSO)
 - STSA focused on developing participants knowledge of global values and diversity, empathy, and awareness of global conditions.

Conceptual Framework: Diversity Consciousness

- Framework: Diversity consciousness (Bucher, 2015) as a mindset for understanding and valuing human differences.
- Relevance: Aligns with ILSSO goals for global learning, emphasizing empathy, global values, and awareness of global conditions.



02. METHODOLOGY

This study was part of a larger qualitative research project and implemented a qualitative autophotography design (Glaw et al., 2017; Latz, 2017).

- Visual methodology through which participants express their internalized experiences
 - Photographs and supportive captions.
- Participants: 52 ILSSO participants.
- Data Collection: Photo and caption submissions through Qualtrics.
- Prompts:
 - The leadership competencies they developed
 - The leadership competencies they feel are needed in agriculture
 - The photo that represented the most impactful learning experience during the STSA
- Analysis: Linguistic photo captions analyzed using the constant comparative method.

03. FINDINGS

Themes:

- Agriculture industry exposure**
 - "One can only learn so much from a textbook and before this trip I knew very little about Costa Rican agriculture. The rich background of knowledge I now possess from seeing, tasting, smelling, and hearing about each specific piece of Costa Rican agriculture will forever hold a special place of understanding and curiosity in my heart."
- Development of diversity consciousness**
 - "We are dramatically unaware of what is outside of our area/country and need to broaden our understanding."
- Strengthening of communication skills**
 - "This photo shows us building a connection throughout the week. In agriculture, you need to be able to trust one another, to use effective communication, and to build connections, both domestically and globally."
- Personal growth**
 - I selected this picture of golden milk and a curry masala biscuit because it was something that I really didn't think that I would like but I was very surprised to like it. If I had not tried it and gone out of my comfort zone, I never would have discovered something new that I liked."
- Expansion of social capital**
 - "Overall, I was able to process more of the learning opportunities because of these people and also develop friends and connections that will last after the conclusion of ILSSO."

Key Insights:

- Exposure to agritourism operations.
- Development of diversity consciousness through cultural immersion.
- Impactful experiences in unstructured cultural settings.
- Communication skills development due to cultural barriers.
- Significant personal growth and expansion of social capital.



04. CONCLUSIONS

- Allowed students to view practical application, develop their diversity consciousness (Bucher, 2015), and experience transculturation (Bucher, 2015).
- Did not assist in the gain of industry knowledge (Cheng, 2013; Huffman et al., 2020).
- Limited Unstructured Immersion:
 - Limited due to a rigid schedule.
 - Cultural exposure still reported.
- Agriculture Industry Exposure:
 - Agriculture industry exposure created perspective but not knowledge gain.

05. RECOMENDATIONS

- Quantitative instruments:
 - Measure true knowledge gain
 - Quantify diversity consciousness development
- Incorporate post-trip interviews for deeper understanding of photo submissions.
- Conduct a comparison study:
 - Compare National FFA's domestic study tour programs and short-term study abroad programs for leadership learning outcomes.

