Research Article

Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad
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Volume 38 Issue 3, pp. 205-240
DOI: 10.36366/frontiers.v38i3.1241
www.frontiersjournal.org

Photovoice: An engaging method to assess student learning in short-term, sport-related, study abroad experiences

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Abstract

Today's college students are highly experienced with technology, smartphones, digital media and have grown up in a generation surrounded by rapid evolution and advancement. They consume and produce photos and videos as a form of entertainment and as a way to communicate. Thus, as an experiential learning tool, photovoice methodology provides the opportunity to integrate these technologies in educational experiences. This study included the use of photovoice in a short-term, sport-related study abroad trip to Italy that also included service-learning experiences. Students were instructed to take photographs and reflect on several learning outcomes. Based on the results of the study, the authors recommend photovoice as an effective tool to assess learning outcomes for service learning and short-term study abroad experiences.

Abstract in Italian

Gli studenti universitari di oggi hanno grande dimestichezza con la tecnologia, gli smartphone e imedia digitali, essendo cresciuti in un'epoca caratterizzata da

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Date accepted: August 10th, 2026

rapidi cambiamenti e progressi. Essi fruiscono eproducono foto e video sia come forma di intrattenimento sia come mezzo di comunicazione. Pertanto, in quanto strumento di apprendimento esperienziale, la metodologia della fotovoce offre l'opportunità di integraretali tecnologie nelle esperienze formative. Lo studio ha previsto l'impiego della fotovoce nell'ambito di unviaggio di studio in Italia di breve durata, incentrato sullo sport e comprensivo di esperienze di apprendimento attraverso il servizio. Agli studenti è stato chiesto di scattare fotografie e di riflettere su diversi obiettivi diapprendimento. Sulla base dei risultati ottenuti, gli autori propongono la fotovoce come strumento efficace per valutare gli esiti formativi legati all'apprendimento attraverso il servizio e alle esperienze di studio all'estero dibreve durata.

Keywords

Photovoice, service learning, study abroad, qualitative

1. Introduction

Today's college students have grown up with modern digital and social media technologies that not only enhance their entertainment experiences but also serve as primary modes of communication. Statistics show that 98% of people ages 18-29 own a smartphone (Pew Research Center, 2024). Further, students use smartphones to access social media sites that are primarily photo-based, such as Instagram and Snapchat. Approximately 76% of Americans aged 18-29 use Instagram, and 65% use Snapchat (Pew Research Center, 2024). Utilizing technology students are interested in and engaged with, could be beneficial in enhancing student learning of course content. In fact, Gideon (2017) found students' achievement increased significantly when they used smartphones as mobile learning devices. Utilizing smartphone technology and implementing a photo-based methodology such as photovoice, may be more appealing and relevant to students. Moreover, linking photovoice to high-impact experiential learning practices like study abroad and service learning may produce positive learning outcomes for students. This study uses photovoice as part of a short-term, sport-related study abroad trip to Italy that included service-learning. Students were instructed to take one or two photographs and write two sentences of reflection to demonstrate understanding of each of the following learning outcomes: (a) cultural understanding, (b) international sport

learning, (c) social issues and serving, (d) growth in relationships with others, (e) overcoming stereotypes and bias, (f) leadership skills and communication, and (g) personal growth and development.

2. Conceptual background

2.1. High-impact experiential learning practices

Learning outside the classroom can be as important and meaningful as what is learned inside the classroom. The American Association of Colleges and Universities recommend offering high-impact practices (HIPs), as evidence shows significant educational benefits and higher levels of learning success for students who are engaged in them (American Association of Colleges and Universities, 2024). According to the National Survey of Student Engagement (2021), HIPs are activities that "facilitate learning outside of the classroom, require meaningful interactions with faculty and students, encourage collaboration with diverse others, and provide frequent and substantive feedback" (para. 1). HIPs include: (a) service learning, (b) learning communities, (c) research with faculty, (d) internships, (e) study abroad, and (f) culminating senior experiences (para. 2). High-impact practices can assist students in developing applicable skills through engaged and applied learning. In fact, Brownell and Swaner (2009) contend high-impact practices can serve to connect and engage students from varying diverse backgrounds even more than traditional classroom instruction. For the purpose of this study, focus is given to short-term study abroad and service learning because they are experiential learning pedagogies.

Boydell (1976, p. 19) describes experiential learning as "meaningful discovery," occurring when learners discover knowledge on their own, based on their individual observations and insights. Kolb (1984) noted that experiential learning theory suggests "knowledge is continuously derived from and tested out in the experiences of the learner" (p. 27). In addition to lived-experience, Kolb's theoretical model includes reflection, which he believes is a co-requisite for true learning. Typical reflective practices include journal writing or meeting as a group to discuss learners' insights and observations. Lewis and Williams (1994) noted that in its "simplest form, experiential learning means learning from experience or learning by doing. Experiential education first immerses adult learners in an experience and then encourages reflection about the experience to develop new skills, new attitudes, or new

ways of thinking" (p. 5). Experiential learning is an essential component of learning that allows for flexibility with the ever-changing and evolving classroom environment (Kolb 1984; Lewis & Williams, 1994). Previously and specific to the field of sport management, experiential learning theory has been utilized to assess students' service learning and study abroad learning outcomes (Veraldo & Yost, 2021). Students in this study also engaged in service learning and short-term study abroad.

2.2. Study abroad and service learning

Study abroad, which includes educational travel internationally, can be a powerful environment where learning takes place (Stone & Petrick, 2013). Collegiate study abroad has been found to be "one of the most important experiences students can have during their undergraduate years" (Paige et al., 2009, p. S41). Travel has assisted students' comprehension and ability to absorb and understand various cultures, issues, and subjects (Mouton, 2002).

Paige et al. (2009) queried 6,000 students that had studied abroad and found a majority indicated study abroad as more impactful than any other experience in college (including friendships and coursework). Other researchers have found study abroad contributing to many aspects of learning, including change of perspective or worldview (Dwyer 2004), independence (Bachner & Zeutschel, 2009), self-confidence (Bachner & Zeutschel, 2009; Chieffo, 2007), intercultural development (Ingraham & Peterson, 2004; Rexeisen et al., 2008), global engagement (Paige et al., 2009), empathy that augmented and informed their perspectives (Ingle & Johnson, 2019) and dispelling of stereotypes (Freestone & Geldens, 2008). Ingle and Johnson (2019) found students on study abroad were able to make comparisons and see connections in individual and experiential ways, and that the experience was overall transformative for them.

Short-term study abroad, of eight weeks or less, is the fastest-growing segment of study abroad, accounting for nearly 64% of American study abroad students (Open Doors, 2025). Chieffo and Griffiths (2004) compared over 800 students that had traveled on a short-term travel study program with over 1,500 students who did not travel. They found students who traveled reported an increase in functional knowledge, intercultural awareness, and personal growth. While studying abroad, many programs choose to incorporate service-learning activities. By combining both study abroad and service learning, the

impact for students can be even greater. The focus of service-learning emphasizes the reflection and those insights that lead to learning new experiences (Bruening et al., 2010; Eyler et al., 1996). Service learning is viewed as experiential learning with many of the outcomes mirroring what has been identified in other studies related to study-abroad experiences.

Service-learning can impact academic outcomes of complexity of understanding, problem analysis, critical thinking, and cognitive development (Batchelder & Root, 1994; Eyler & Giles, 1999). Eyler and Giles (1999) found service-learning participation improves students' ability to apply what they have learned into their own lives. Further, service-learning has been shown to have a positive effect on students' personal efficacy, personal identity, spiritual growth, and moral development (Astin & Sax; 1998). Additionally, service learning is found to have a positive effect on reducing stereotypes and facilitating cultural and racial understanding (Astin & Sax, 1998).

2.3. Photovoice

Photovoice is a research methodology first used primarily in community-based participatory research where participants use photographs and reflection to identify important issues and promote further understanding of their lived experiences (Wang & Burris, 1994). Photovoice "uses the immediacy of the visual image to furnish evidence and to promote an effective, participatory means of sharing expertise and knowledge" (p. 369). This method in qualitative research can provide opportunities for participants (i.e., students) to express their values or ideas through photos and accompanied narratives (Wang & Burris, 1997). It provides a deeper understanding and comprehension for those using it (Plunkett et al., 2013). A significant advantage of photovoice is that it provides a way to for students to become more "aware of their surroundings" and "amplify their voices" (Goodhart et al, 2006, p. 55). One of the positive and appealing components of photovoice is that it is flexible and can be utilized in a variety of settings (Reed et.al, 2024). Comparisons are often made between photovoice and photo journaling. Photo journaling was formed based upon the photovoice method (Wang & Burris, 1997). Both methods require the participant to choose and contemplate their photos. The main difference between photo journaling and photovoice resides with the intended purpose. Photovoice seeks to promote dialogue within a group, discuss meaning, and conditions to enhance lives, and encourages participants to be catalysts for change within their own

communities (Wang & Burris, 1997). The following is a discussion of several studies that utilized photovoice in short-term study abroad and service-learning student experiences.

Schell et al. (2009) utilized a photovoice assignment with graduate students in sociology and found it enhanced the students' presentation skills, critical thinking, and knowledge construction skills. Biber and Brandenburg (2020) used it to gain deeper understanding of students' experiences of education, health and wellness in a short-term study abroad trip to Belize. Johnson (2020) used it as a pedagogical and research method in a class-based project to collect sport management graduate students' perspectives on a service-learning experience where they assessed community needs and sustainable improvements. Photovoice has also been used as a way to consider and utilize the voices of youth in sport for development research (Martin & LeCrom, 2021).

Photovoice is a convenient methodology where participants can take pictures to identify phenomena they noticed as being impactful and represent either positive or negative issues or concerns (Sutton-Brown, 2014). It is participatory and allows students the opportunity to demonstrate their learning through photos, providing brief descriptions, as well as their insights and reflection (Nelson, 2019).

Schell et al. (2009) noted very little academic discourse on the instructional uses of photovoice. Shaw and Hoeber (2016) encouraged researchers in sport management to try new qualitative methods of research and expand the methods and tools that are utilized to collect data. Traditional ways of approaching research may not fit with the complexity of current issues, nor be as beneficial to today's student. The authors of this study chose the photovoice methodology because of the consciousness raising and community aspects of the service-learning part of the trip, and to engage students in a unique way with the technology they utilize in their everyday lives.

3. Methods

This qualitative study utilized photovoice methodology to assess student learning on a short-term, sport-related study abroad trip to Italy, which also incorporated several service-learning experiences. As outlined, photovoice can

provide a deeper understanding and comprehension for those using it. It is a valid measure of data collection, as the participant is using photographs and written voice to illustrate observed phenomena. The foundational tenets of photovoice include picture taking, deciding which photos are the most representative, documenting personal reflections and thoughts, and discussing them with others who are also in the group (Wang & Burris, 1997). Participants in the study were specifically asked to provide photovoice reflections (one or two pictures and two sentences of description) for specific learning outcomes related to culture, sport, social issues, building relationships, overcoming stereotypes, leadership and communication, and personal growth. Participants were asked to provide short, concise sentences in their descriptions to encourage critical thinking and clarity. The authors recognize this constraint as limiting in the narrative inquiry process.

3.1. Participants

All the students were enrolled in an undergraduate course about international sport management. Students could audit the course or enroll for a letter grade. A one credit hour service-learning credit was required for students participating in the study abroad portion of the course. The additional credit of service-learning was a pass/fail experience and no grades were assigned. The students had two main requirements to earn credit for the course. They had to complete 30 hours of service-learning which included about 15 hours before the trip, organizing a clothing drive which would benefit some of the refugee centers where they served on the trip. Additionally, students were required to complete a photovoice journal to earn the additional one hour of credit for the course. Student participation in the study was completely voluntary and the decision to be included or not included would not impact whether or not they passed the course or future courses taught by the faculty members who were also the authors of this study. The students who chose to participate (all 20 traveling on the trip) were asked to sign an informed consent document requesting access to their photovoice journals after completing the trip. The students could opt out of having their photovoice journal included in the study. Additionally, they could have any part of their photovoice journal excluded from the study. There was no incentive or repercussion for participation in the study. Nineteen of the 20 students turned in their photovoice journals to be included in the study. The age range of the students was 19 to 26 years old and

11 of the participants were female, eight were male. Fifteen students identified as White, three students identified as Black, and one student identified as Biracial. Ten of the students regularly attended the international sport management course before traveling abroad, seven of the students were sport management majors and all the students participated in service learning while on the study abroad trip. See Table 1 for more information.

All four authors of this study accompanied the students on the trip. Two of the authors were faculty members at the university where the students attended. One of these faculty members was the instructor of the course, both the international sport management and service-learning pieces. The additional two authors are also sport management faculty members at other universities and who are experienced in organizing travel abroad experiences for students in higher education.

TABLE (1)
PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS AND CHARACTERISTICS

Characteristic	Category	*n*
Age Range	19–26 years	-
Gender	Female	11
	Male	8
Race/Ethnicity	White	15
	Black	3
	Biracial	1
Course Attendance	Regularly Attended and Graded	10
	Did Not Regularly Attend - Audit	9
Major	Sport Management	7
	Other Majors	12
Study Abroad Experience	Participated in Service Learning	19

Note. *N* = 19. Age is reported as a range; therefore, frequency is not applicable.

3.2. Setting

The study abroad trip was twelve days, traveling to Rome and Cinque Terra, Italy. The participants lived in apartment-style housing in each city. They engaged in cultural experiences including visiting historic markets and neighborhoods, touring the Forum, Coliseum, Villa Borghese, Vatican, Sistine Chapel, St. Peters Cathedral, and more. They engaged in participation and

spectator sporting experiences (e.g., Italian Open Tennis, Stadio Olimpico tour, snorkeling, kayaking, and hiking). The service-learning included serving food at soup kitchens or churches, helping church staff with specific needs, and engaging men, women, and children with physical and mental disabilities.

3.3. Data analysis

A three-stage process is needed when using photovoice as a methodology (Wang & Burris, 1997). First, participants must take photographs of what most accurately reflects what they have been tasked to do. Second, participants must contextualize, write, and reflect on what the photographs mean. Finally, researchers codify the data by identifying themes that emerge from the photos and reflections (Wang & Burris, 1997). In this study, participants were instructed to take one or two photographs which demonstrated or represented each of the following learning outcomes: (a) cultural understanding, (b) international sport learning, (c) social issues and serving, (d) growth in relationships with others, (e) overcoming stereotypes and bias, (f) leadership skills and communication, and (g) personal growth and development. The students were instructed to ask permission of the executive staff where they served vulnerable populations, if they could take photos. Additionally, they were instructed not to take pictures of identifiable signage or buildings or the faces of the vulnerable populations with whom they served. Next, participants were asked to write two sentences in their photovoice journals that would contextualize their photographs. Initially, the authors wanted the students to focus on capturing the meaning of the learning objective through their photo choice, without having to rely on the two-sentence narrative to explain the photo. When analyzing the data, the authors determined the two-sentence narrative would be a limitation in the study and would recommend longer narratives in future studies. About one week after the study abroad trip was complete, the students submitted their journals to the faculty of instruction. Finally, the researchers then coded the data to identify themes and to assess whether or not meaningful learning occurred.

Several measures were taken to ensure credibility and trustworthiness of the data analysis. There were four researchers involved in conducting this study. Two of the researchers coded nine of the photovoice journals and the other two researchers coded the remaining ten journals. The initial codes were the seven learning outcomes that were provided to the participants. Each

researcher reviewed the photographs and two sentence reflections the participants had documented for each of the learning outcomes. A description of the photographs and a short summary of the reflection were recorded in an individual spreadsheet for each researcher. After all coding had been completed of the journal entries for each of the participants, the four researchers came together on a face-to-face conference call to discuss emerging themes for each of the learning outcomes. Together, the four researchers came to consensus on the themes related to each of the learning outcomes. Although there was some variation among participants, there were also distinct themes related to each of the seven learning outcomes.

4. Findings

The purpose of the study was to see if photovoice is an effective methodology for assessing student learning in a short-term study abroad and service-learning trip. The following paragraphs contain demonstrated learning using representative photographs and written reflections as they relate to each of the learning outcomes. It is important to note, some of the images in photographs are blurred to protect the identity of individuals who did not have an opportunity to sign an informed consent document. Additionally, in some instances, we described pictures that were taken because they were important to include in the findings, but the picture would have contained too many blurred images to include in the manuscript.

4.1. Cultural Understanding

Overall, participants demonstrated learning and cultural understanding through pictures of food, transportation and religious buildings and rituals. Participant Seven wrote, “One of the biggest culture shocks I experienced was navigating the transportation options in Rome. It is a lot different than in Ohio!” The photo submitted to illustrate this comment is of an overcrowded, underground subway car. The student took the photo from above their own head with arms stretched high to show a view of a packed subway.

Six additional participants mentioned differences in transportation as a way to understand part of the Italian culture using photographs of metro lines, small cars and extremely busy roads. The use of these photographs could be due

to the fact that most of the participants are from the Midwest United States and didn't have a lot of experience with public/mass transportation or big-city traffic.

Five participants took photographs of food, which demonstrated Italian culture. Before the trip, many of the participants mentioned their interest in exploring how authentic Italian food differed from American Italian food and thus took pictures to reflect cultural understanding. Participant 16 took a photograph of gelato and wrote, "One of the unique foods I was able to try while in Italy was gelato, which has been an Italian tradition since the Renaissance."

Five students took photographs of religious buildings or rituals and mentioned the greater importance of religion, primarily Catholicism, in the Italian culture. There were also three photographs relating the importance of history to the Italian culture and a few observations on the more relaxed concept of time.

Please see Figure 1 in the Appendix to view the photo associated with this finding.

4.2. International sport learning

Most participant learning was demonstrated with photographs of stadiums or events and written reflections remarked on the history and multipurpose use of stadiums as well as Italian fandom of tennis and soccer. Participant Five stated, "Stadio Olympico is one of the oldest sports stadiums in Rome and is home to two Serie A soccer teams (Roma A and S.S. Lazio), as well as the host of Olympic sporting events."

Eleven additional students took photographs of stadiums and discussed the history, use, and significance of the stadiums. Five students took photographs and reflected on appreciating the passion Italians have for the sports of tennis and soccer, as well as their respect for the history and etiquette relating to each of the sports. Participant Six stated, "Getting an idea of how tennis is played as a whole was so insightful, even more, being around an international crowd who is so devoted to the sport was very rewarding to take in."

Most of the participants had never toured a professional soccer stadium and had not attended a professional tennis match, which might explain a focus

on history and use of stadiums as well as observations of serious fandom in these two sports.

Please see Figure 2 and Figure 3 in the Appendix to view the photos associated with this finding.

4.3. Social issues and serving

`Many of the participants' photographs demonstrating this learning outcome related to understanding their own privilege, the need for social services, and specific concerns for women like sex trafficking, abuse, and poverty. Participant ten took this photograph while serving at a home for adult men and women with physical and mental disabilities.

They reflected, "Some of the pictures while serving captured the challenging reality of some people's lives, such as not being able to feed yourself, physically and economically, and I'm so grateful I got to give back at an international level." Five more participants reflected on understanding their own privilege and seven more discussed positive feelings about having the opportunity to serve others. A couple of the service-learning placements included serving refugees and many of them were women. This experience contributed to learning about challenges that primarily poor or impoverished women refugees face in their daily lives. Participant One took a photograph of one of the rooms at a refugee center and wrote, "Sex trafficking and abuse are some of the major issues the women and children refugees face, so only women are allowed to work in this room."

In addition to further understanding of the plight of women and recognizing their own privilege, students also took photographs and reflected on the care and effort it takes to serve others. Some of the participants had served in different capacities before, however for others, this was their first opportunity to serve, and it was a meaningful learning experience for them.

Please see Figure 4 and Figure 5 in the Appendix to view the photos associated with this finding.

4.4. Growing in relationships with others

Most of the participants photographs and comments related to this learning outcome focused on forming new relationships and building stronger

bonds with existing relationships. Participant 17 stated, "Over the course of this trip, I came out of my shell and made multiple connections. We spent a lot of time together and I hope to keep in touch with the friends I made."

Participant Five suggested building stronger bonds and growing in relationship with the faculty members who chaperoned the trip. They reflected, "I felt like the best part of this trip was getting to see professors outside of the classroom/their professional environment. It showed me that you can be professional while enjoying life and having fun."

Twelve of the 19 participants mentioned new relationships and shared photographs to go along with those reflections. Seven mentioned strengthening relationships and four mentioned positive feelings gained when they were pushed out of their comfort zones to build new relationships or experience new things.

Please see Figure 6 and Figure 7 in the Appendix to view the photos associated with this finding.

4.5. Overcoming stereotypes and bias

Many of the participants photographed and reflected upon specific stereotypes or biases they had before the trip, but there was large consensus that interactions with people during their service learning and other experiences helped them to overcome the stereotype or bias. Participant 11 wrote, "I heard that the people were very rude and weren't that nice…But they let me get under their umbrella and take a picture with them."

Seven of the participants reflected on photographs while serving at the refugee centers and churches. They acknowledged better understanding of circumstances and gained new understanding of the plight of others. Participant 15 stated, "I met and talked to people from various backgrounds at the refugee center which allowed me to better understand and empathize with the many problems and struggles each person can face."

Other participants' photographs and comments were related more to dispelling preconceived notions on different aspects of the Italian culture, like food and transportation. A couple participants mentioned putting down their cell phones because they didn't want Italians to stereotype American young adults as always being on their phones and not conversing with others around

them. Because of the variety of photographs and reflections on this particular learning outcome, a more specific prompt may have been helpful.

Please see Figure 8 and Figure 9 in the Appendix to view the photos associated with this finding.

4.6. Leadership skills and communication

`Six of the participants took photographs and spoke specifically about stepping up to lead in small groups and two journaled about learning about leadership from watching the trip leaders (faculty) as they led the group. Participant 12 wrote, "A lot of the time I was the one leading others in the subway when faculty asked us to. It was fun trying to figure it out and helping others understand public transportation."

Six participants photographed and wrote about either leadership or communication when it came to navigating public transportation. Eleven of the students journaled about communication and of the 11, seven wrote specifically about communication as it related to overcoming language barriers and learning to communicate even though they didn't know Italian. Participant Six wrote, "While working in the soup kitchen, I was able to communicate with those who were non-English speakers, learning a few phrases of their language. While we weren't able to have full conversations, the interactions we did have made me feel very connected to them." The photograph isn't depicting the reflection, but it is the group and the location where the service learning took place. Large group photos were common in many of the participants' photographs.

One particularly meaningful example of learning about communication was when a handful of participants attended mass at a small church where they were serving. The mass was entirely in Italian, but many of the rituals are the same in the Catholic church across the globe. The participants were able to follow along during the service, sing specific hymns, and speak specific responses along with the congregation. After mass, some of the parishioners wanted to speak with the participants and because of the language barrier, they used a smartphone with the Google Translate application. The participants and the parishioners made connections and enjoyed communicating even though there was a language barrier.

Please see Figure 10 and Figure 11 in the Appendix to view the photos associated with this finding.

4.7. Personal growth and development

`For the last learning outcome, there were five main themes relating to their growth and development. They mentioned the impact of helping others (four participants), gaining a better understanding of their own privilege (four participants), appreciating other cultures (four participants), building new relationships (three participants), and pushing through something hard or stretching their comfort zone (six participants). Participant 14 stretched her comfort zone and wrote,

> I'm going to be honest; I get a little uncomfortable around disabled people. I grew a lot in just the two days that I was working with this little boy. I got more comfortable around him and started learning some of his mannerisms. I was able to help him and give him what he wanted throughout the day later in the service learning.

Participant Three felt like the experience would help his career and summarized his experience when he stated, "Overall, I felt that I grew as a person. I have a newfound sense of understanding about worldwide issues and my experiences there have helped to further prepare me for a profession in helping others."

Please see Figure 13 in the Appendix to view the photo associated with this finding.

4.8. Results Summary

` Overall, participants communicated and demonstrated learning through photovoice journaling in all seven areas. The four researchers determined photovoice is an effective methodology to assess learning outcomes for service learning and short-term study abroad. A more visual and quantitative representation of the codes and themes is presented in Table 2 below. The following paragraphs provide a more in-depth discussion of the results of the study, as well as the limitations and conclusions.

TABLE (2)
CODES AND EMERGENT THEMES FROM STUDENT EXPERIENCES

Theme	Code	*n*
Cultural Understanding	Transportation	6

	Food	5
	Religion	5
International Sport	Stadium history and multipurpose use	12
	Appreciation and passion for tennis and soccer	5
Social Issues and Serving	Recognizing privilege	5
Growth in Relationship with Others	New relationships	12
Overcoming Stereotypes and Bias	Better understanding of others' plight because of serving	7
Leadership Skills and Communication	Communicating and leading while navigating transportation	6
	Stepping up to lead in small groups	5
Personal Growth and Development	Overcame something hard or stretched their comfort zone	6
	Understand their own privilege	4
	Recognize the impact of helping others	4
	Deeper appreciation of other cultures	4

Note. *Codes represent recurring concepts identified within each theme; n indicates the frequency of occurrences.*

5. Discussion

The authors of the study identified several benefits of photovoice as a pedagogical tool, such as its ease of implementation and it is much more participative than passive. Additionally, it appeals to Gen Z. Ahmed (2019) found more than half of Gen Zers spend nine hours or more in a typical day using smartphones, more than two-thirds use their smartphones in conducting research for class assignments, and about 80% use their smartphones to take and view photos. However, the overall purpose of the study was to evaluate photovoice as an effective methodology for students to demonstrate learning outcomes in a short-term study abroad and service-learning experience. The authors identified seven learning outcomes to be assessed in the experience. The following is a discussion of the effectiveness of photovoice journaling as a tool to assess these student learning outcomes.

Kelly et al. (2018) found, "as students become active participants of image gathering and interpretation, learning arises from increased visual literacy and exploration of cultural bias" (p. 69). At the surface, the participants in this study demonstrated cultural understanding through their photovoice journals,

however, the depth of their learning is difficult to assess with one or two pictures and two sentences. Additionally, as Kelly et al. (2018) found, students who have more travel experience or cultural intelligence may do better with demonstrating cultural understanding. The authors of the study recommend expanding the reflection to more than two sentences to provide more depth in cultural understanding for students.

In determining international sport learning, many of the participants were exposed to professional tennis and European soccer for the first time. The information presented at the stadium and tennis event was new and different. For this learning outcome, the authors found photovoice to be an engaging way to demonstrate new information and learning. Not much of the information they learned can be shared in one or two sentences, but their mention of the history and multipurpose nature of stadiums indicated there was more depth to their learning that could not fit in the two-sentence requirement of the assignment. Depending on how a student must demonstrate learning, more than two sentences may need to accompany the photograph(s).

When it comes to social issues and serving, the authors highly recommend incorporating service learning in study abroad experiences to increase exposure to and understanding the circumstances of others. As noted earlier, travel has assisted students' comprehension and ability to absorb and understand various cultures, issues, and subjects (Mouton, 2002). Service-learning participation has an impact on such academic outcomes as demonstrated complexity of understanding, problem analysis, critical thinking, and cognitive development (Batchelder & Root, 1994; Eyler & Giles, 1999). Combining the two can produce significant learning and the photovoice journals are effective at demonstrating meaningful learning of the participants.

Rubenstein et al. (2018) found their study abroad, service-learning program allowed students to form meaningful relationships with each other. When assessing the learning outcome related to growth in relationships with others, all participants chose photographs of themselves with at least two others – peers and/or faculty members. In their journals, they discussed forming new relationships and strengthening relationships during the abroad experiences. Grantham et al. (2015) claim "students appreciate feeling cared about, and they want to connect with faculty members on a personal level" (p. 131). This wasn't a significant finding in this study, but a few participants used photographs with

faculty members and wrote about connecting with them during the experiences they had on the trip. The photovoice journals were effective at demonstrating growth in relationships to others.

Brown and Roodin (2001) found service learning can help students overcome negative stereotypes. The photovoice journals of participants in this study also suggested they had some of their own stereotypes weakened while serving and/or abroad. While the photovoice journals reflect this finding, the authors suggest more consistent and prolonged service-learning experiences to more fully reject stereotypes. A reflection of more than two sentences may also be helpful in assessing learning of this outcome.

When looking specifically at leadership and communication skills, some of the students photographed and mentioned instances where they stepped up to lead. However, most of the participants photographed and reflected on communication, particularly as it related to language barriers. Previously, Veraldo and Yost (2021) found communication to be particularly important to being able to adapt to traveling and serving abroad. The participants' photographs and reflections in this study confirmed this notion and highlighted their own adaptability and ability to communicate.

Similar to Rose et al. (2021) in their international service-learning experience, we found participants showed personal growth and development in the following areas: skill development (helping others, 4 participants), boundary spanning (building new relationships, 3 participants), cultural humility (understanding privilege, 4 participants), open-mindedness (cultural appreciation, 4 participants), and confidence (stretching comfort zones, 6 participants). Some participants photographed and reflected on growth in more than one area. Photovoice was effective in demonstrating learning of this outcome.

Overall, the authors agree the photovoice methodology is engaging and useful in assessing learning outcomes, particularly as they relate to service-learning and short-term study abroad programs. For some of the learning outcomes, more reflection would be helpful at understanding depth of learning. For other outcomes, a more detailed learning outcome prompt may be beneficial to the student. The following is a more detailed explanation of the limitations of the study and in utilizing photovoice as a pedagogical tool.

5.1. Limitations

` As with all studies, there were limitations within this study. First, this study was limited to twelve days. A longer trip and increased exposure and experience may have provided further learning and reflection (Dwyer, 2004), but in today's economy, a shorter trip may be preferred as cost becomes a large factor with the longer abroad experiences. A second limitation is that the sample size was limited to 19 participants on one trip. Other limitations stem from some of the logistics of the journal writing. Depth of learning is difficult to assess with only one or two photographs and two sentences of reflection. As photovoice serves to promote a deeper understanding of lived experiences, in the future, the two-sentence description limit should be removed. This could facilitate a more in-depth understanding of the values and ideas extracted from the photos. Additionally, the authors learned participants require additional opportunities for dialogue during the experience. Due to the busy nature of the trip with a packed schedule, the students may have benefitted from dedicated time each day where students could reflect in more length and detail on their photos. A couple of the learning prompts could have been more specific, particularly the outcome related to overcoming stereotypes and bias. A more effective prompt might be; "capture a stereotype or bias you hold and demonstrate how you have overcome that stereotype or bias."

5.2. Conclusion

`Overall, the authors found photovoice to be both engaging and effective in demonstrating reflection and student learning. Beyond simply utilizing photovoice as a creative tool, the methodology provided students with a way to critically reflect on their experiences, apply course information, and connect personal perspectives with that content. The process also allowed for students to take ownership of their learning in ways that traditional written assignments sometimes fail to capture. Further, it provided a tool that students today are comfortable with utilizing and projecting their thoughts and ideas. The authors learned that participants require additional opportunities for reflection and dialogue during the experience. As photovoice serves to promote a deeper understanding of lived experiences, in the future, the two-sentence description limitation should be removed. This could facilitate a more in-depth understanding of the values and ideas extracted from the visual images. The authors encourage other faculty to employ photovoice as it provides students a

way to integrate their own perspectives and apply experiences to academic concepts in a rapidly evolving academic environment.

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Appendix: Photos Associated with Findings

Figure (2)
Photo Associated with Cultural Understanding Finding



Note. Picture of a hand holding a serving of three different flavors of gelato

FIGURE (2)
PHOTO ASSOCIATED WITH INTERNATIONAL SPORT LEARNING



Note. Photo inside an empty Stadio Olimpico

FIGURE (3)
PHOTO ASSOCIATED WITH INTERNATIONAL SPORT LEARNING



Note. Picture inside Foro Italico during a match at the Italian Open

FIGURE (4)
PHOTO ASSOCIATED WITH SOCIAL ISSUES AND SERVING



Note. Picture of a female student feeding an individual with disabilities

FIGURE (5)
PHOTO ASSOCIATED WITH SOCIAL ISSUES AND SERVING



Note. Picture of a children's play room at a refuge center

FIGURE (6)
PHOTO ASSOCIATED WITH GROWING IN RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHERS



Note. Picture of many students enjoying a meal together outside of an Italian restaurant

FIGURE (7)
PHOTO ASSOCIATED WITH GROWING IN RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHERS



Note. Picture of four male students with their male professor and the backdrop of the Italian coastal town of Cinque Terre

Figure (8)
Photo Associated with Overcoming Stereotypes and Bias



Note. Picture of a male student with an older Italian woman under a rainbow colored umbrella

FIGURE (9)
PHOTO ASSOCIATED WITH OVERCOMING STEREOTYPES AND BIAS



Note. Picture of two female students at the registration desk for an Italian soup kitchen

FIGURE (10)
PHOTO ASSOCIATED WITH LEADERSHIP SKILLS AND COMMUNICATION



Note. Picture of four female students standing in an italian subway

FIGURE (11)

PHOTO ASSOCIATED WITH LEADERSHIP SKILLS AND COMMUNICATION



Note. Picture of a large group of students with their professors in front of an Italian soup kitchen

FIGURE (12)
PHOTO ASSOCIATED WITH CULTURAL UNDERSTANDING FINDING



Note. Picture of a female student with her back toward the camera looking at and talking to an individual with disabilities sitting in a chair

Figure (13)
Photo Associated with Personal Growth and Development



Note. Picture of a male student with a large smile standing in the middle of an Italian cathedral

Author Biographies

Cynthia Veraldo is the Graduate Program Director for Sport Administration at Xavier University. She also teaches in the undergraduate Sport Management and Sport Marketing programs and oversees the post-baccalaureate Coaching Education Certification. Throughout her career, she has accompanied students in travel abroad experiences to the Dominican Republic, Greece, Italy, Belgium, France, and England. She has previous publications and presentations primarily focusing on experiential learning and outcomes related to those experiences.

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