

LEADING & MANAGING STUDY ABROAD DURING AND POST-PANDEMIC: AN AUTOETHNOGRAPHY

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Abstract

This paper shares the lived experience of both leading and managing an international exchange center at a Japanese university through a transformational leadership lens. Over the course of the pandemic, the center director was charged with predicting threats, dealing with crises, identifying the need for change, creating a vision for both during and post-pandemic, and executing that change in collaboration with colleagues.

The research takes an autoethnographic approach where the researcher recounts the story her own personal experience, coupled with an ethnographic analysis of the cultural context and implications of that experience. The use of autoethnography attempts to provide a unique opportunity for a simultaneous analysis of the particularities of leadership practice and management roles across different socio-cultural environments. This study infuses the author's own emotional reactions to being immersed in the challenges of working as a non-Japanese in a Japanese context as she challenged dominant paradigms and attempted to move the university policy, procedures, and systems forward through to a new normal.

The presentation begins by outlining types of educational leadership, focusing on defining transformational leadership. Next, we explore critical incidents during the pandemic and management and leadership reactions to those incidents, finally, exploring concrete examples of how, with a sense of hope, optimism, and energy, the team worked towards restarting study abroad post-pandemic.

This research will be of interest to administrators and scholars in educational leadership and management.

Biography



With over 20 years-experience living and working in Japan, Sarah Louisa, combines her passion for working with people with her knowledge of business, management, and higher education. As an academic, Sarah Louisa teaches courses on organizational behaviour, project management and human resource management. As a researcher, her primary research area is diaspora entrepreneurship. However, as an administrator, she has been involved in managing international programs since 2016 and became a Director of International Exchange in 2020. As well as working at the university, she is also a consultant, working with small and medium sized businesses in Japan on localization and translation projects and intercultural communication training

for entrepreneurs entering the Japanese market.