



Analysis of motivation, travel risk, and travel satisfaction of Taiwan undergraduates on work and travel overseas programmes: Developing measurement scales

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ABSTRACT

Travel is an increasingly important aspiration for young people around the world. In order to explore other places and their culture, and to relax, have fun, and save money to travel, combining overseas work and travel is now a popular young students' activity. Such student travel has a history of 30 years and in 2011 7 countries have permitted a work and travel visa to be issued to Taiwanese students. Every year almost over 3000 Taiwanese young people travel overseas, especially to the United States of America, South Africa, Australia, New Zealand and Japan, to both work and travel in those countries. There they can improve their language skills, expand their international viewpoints and experience different cultures. This study looks at the relationships between work and travel overseas motivations, perceived travel risk and satisfaction for young people, and uses a sample of 151 Taiwanese undergraduates working and traveling in the U.S.A., Australia and New Zealand during 2008 to 2010. Three hypothesized relationships are examined with reference to perceived risk, motivation and satisfaction and measurement scales are proposed.

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1. Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to develop scales that permit an examination of attitudes toward and appraisals of an experience of working holidays by a sample of Taiwanese university students. A framework for this is suggested and is based upon the dimensions of motivation, travel risk and an evaluation of the experience. The study is primarily descriptive as it based on a relatively small sample of students, but as described below the sample was sufficiently large enough to permit some statistical calculations based on data derived from a self-completion questionnaire. These calculations suggest that the scales developed to measure these possess internal consistency and validity.

The paper is based on the premise that within the global village, letting young people develop broader world views has become more important. Additionally it is noted that combining work and travel overseas has become popular among the Asian young in recent years. Consequently, the youth travel market can separate into different categories including: joining study tours, international volunteer organizations, and work and travel overseas. According to the Federation of International Youth Travel Organization (FIYTO), youth travel accounts for 20% of the tourism population, and it has been suggested that youth travel is a significant niche market in terms of size and

importance for specific industry sectors (Chinese Taipei (TAIWAN) Youth Hostel Association, 2007).

Work and travel overseas has been popular for over 30 years. There are about 23 countries issuing visas permitting work and travel overseas, and Taiwan is one of them. Since 2004, Taiwan has signed agreements with Australia, New Zealand, Japan, Canada, and Germany on issuing work and travel visas, and U.S., Australia, and New Zealand are favored destinations. Work and travel overseas not only allows young people to experience local cultures and learn things from their working experience, but also lets them have more opportunities to make friends with people from all over the world. Many countries aggressively offer more opportunities on work and travel overseas to not only enable young people to learn things in multiple ways and interact with more people, but also improve local tourism at the same time.

Work and travel overseas combines three fundamental elements: traveling, learning, and experiencing. Richards (2007), according to the survey done by World Youth Student and Educational (WYSE) Travel Confederation, found that 70% of young travelers valued travel for exploration, learning languages, doing volunteer work, and gaining work experience. Moreover, 34% stated that exploring foreign lands and cultures was their main aim in making trips; 28% took relaxation and fun as their primary objective; while 9% studied abroad and 7% regard working as their main aim.

What makes work and travel overseas unique is that young people work to pay for their living and traveling expenses, while being able to arrange entertainments or short trips in their spare time or after finishing work on either a daily or trip basis. However, there are

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dangers and risks to which such travelers may be exposed. Thus they need to deal with potential challenges and learn to participate in international affairs with an assertive attitude. In short, the processes of travel, work and overcoming problems cannot only help advance study and careers, but also enrich their lives.

There exists a substantial literature on youth related study tours and travel (Byram & Feng, 2006; Carlson & Widaman, 1988; Dolby, 2004; Kitsantas, 2004; McCabe, 1994), but very few researchers have dealt with organized work and overseas travel arrangements, and the concept may deserve further research. The purpose of this study attempts a deeper understanding on the background and traveling style of Taiwanese university students who participate in work and travel overseas, and how motivation, potential risks in travel, and the satisfaction of applicants are influenced by and are related to each other.

2. Theoretical background and hypothesis

2.1. Participating work and travel overseas motivation

Motivations are often defined as an inner state that expresses and strengthens human behavior as well as the driving force behind all actions (Crompton, 1979; Fodness, 1994; Iso-Ahola, 1982; Lei, 2010). Tourists travel for reasons of spirituality, social status, escape, and cultural enrichment (Goeldner, Ritchie, & McIntosh, 2000). As noted in the introduction, work and travel overseas can provide young people with an opportunity to connect with foreign cultures, accumulate experience, and gain self-improvement; but such travel differs from the study tour or study abroad experience.

Pearce and Lee (2005) noted that a core of travel motivational factors including escape, relaxation, relationship enhancement, and self-development that seemed to comprise the central backbone of motivation for all travelers. Motivation can be divided into the intrinsic (push) motive such as obtaining a sense of achievement, enhancing ability and performance and inherent interest, curiosity, experience seeking, comfort and relaxation seeking, sociability, and contributing to the destination (Richards & Wilson, 2004; Ryan & Deci, 2002). It also includes the desire for escape, rest, relaxation, prestige, health and fitness, adventure, and social interaction (Swanson & Horridge, 2006). On the other hand external (pull) motivations are based on the attractiveness of the destination, sunshine and scenery, a place to go for good value, famous tourist attractions, a place for family traveling, and wanting tangible resources (beaches, recreational activities and cultural attractions) and traveler's perceptions and expectations (novelty, benefit expectations, and marketing image) (Kao, Patterson, Scott, & Li, 2008; Newlands, 2004; Swanson & Horridge, 2006).

However, Goeldner and Ritchie (2003) divided motivations into five types: physical, cultural, interpersonal, and prestige, and self-actualization. Paris and Teye (2010) also pointed out that backpacker motivations are personal/social growth; experiential; relaxation; cultural knowledge; budget travel; and independence. Therefore, this study accords with the above literature in a questionnaire designed to measure Taiwan undergraduates' participating motivations for work and travel overseas.

2.2. Travel risk

Different accidents and risks can occur during a young person's work and travels overseas, when young people who lack communication skills in English, fail to understand conditions, traffic and legal systems, health care systems and costs, and labor disputes. For example in April and October 2011 in Australia, four Taiwanese undergraduates had serious car accidents, and three were involved in a murder, because their residence was invaded by local thieves. Therefore, there are dangers and risks that the youth may run into in their journey of

work and travel overseas, including political, environmental, human-induced, natural, food and many other kinds of risks (Dolnicar, 2005; Fuchs & Reichel, 2011).

It may be said that traveling as a form of modern mobility has always been accompanied by risk derived from different sources. Travel risks may not only involve muggings or attacks on the person, but also include risky situations due to unfamiliarity with the local language and culture. However, any situation of vulnerability may count as a risk in itself (Benediktsson, Lund, & Mustonen, 2010). Moreover, the tourist is exposed to specific factors such as bad weather, unfriendly residents, unfamiliar local food, crime, political unrest, disease and natural disasters. These factors often raise the tourist's level of perceived risk (Fuchs & Reichel, 2011; Reisinger & Mavondo, 2006; Sonmez & Graefe, 1998). Similarly, eating local food and exposing oneself to unknown and strange experiences could be considered a form of risk (Maoz, 2007).

Travel risk can also be incorporated into the decisions, practices and performances of the tourist in a more positive way. The perceived risk level can directly influence international vacation destination choice, and the majority of travelers are likely to change their travel plans regarding a destination possesses specific risk factors (Kozak, Crotts, & Law, 2007). On the other hand, Law (2006) examined the probability of occurrence, magnitude of threat and efficacy of official media of infectious disease, terrorist attacks and natural disasters, but found that travelers had low perceived values for the probability of occurrence of these three types of risks. Moreover, Fuchs and Reichel (2011) proposed that risks are perceived rationally, through their expected value, intuition, instinct, and affective evaluation. Although a certain level of risk is an inherent part of travel, the risks can be minimized through careful planning (Richards, 2007), and few young travelers are deterred by terrorism, natural disasters or epidemics (Richards, 2007). Indeed many young people believe that travel is a way of life. However, any risk includes not only the "actual risk" but also "perceived risk". Risk and uncertainty of an outcome is a challenge, and the perception of risk and possible loss is weighed against benefits such as self-fulfillment and social approval in overcoming such challenges should they arise (Bentley & Page, 2008).

Intuitively, travel risk is restricted to physical and equipment risk. Dolnicar (2005) identified the following risk perception categories: political, environmental, health, planning, and property risks. Reisinger and Mavondo (2006) propose that travel risks are cultural, functional, financial, health, physical, political, psychological, satisfaction, social, hijacking, bomb explosion, biochemical attack and time risks. Focusing on the external environment, the travel risks were divided into infectious disease, terrorists attack, and natural disaster risks (Kozak et al., 2007). Recent research studies suggest that human-induced events, financial, service quality, social-psychological questions, natural disasters, car accidents, food safety problems and weather may be better predictors of travel risks (Fuchs & Reichel, 2011). Therefore, this study will use these items to measure the travel risk of work and travel overseas.

2.3. Travel satisfaction

Satisfaction can be regarded as a personal assessment of overall experience in a place of emotional response and as a state of mind. It is a complex human process and involves cognitive and affective processes, as well as other psychological and physiological factors (Anselmsson, 2006). However, tourist satisfaction is the result of the relationship between tourists' expectations about the destination based on their previous destination images, and their evaluation of the outcome of their experience at the destination area. If the actual performance/experience is better than their expectations, this is often interpreted as satisfaction with the consequence that tourists may be willing to revisit a location (Bosque, Marti'n, & Collado, 2006; Chen & Chen, 2010; Devesa, Laguna, & Palacios, 2010; Hui,

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