

A STUDY ON TAIWANESE UNIVERSITY STUDENT'S PERSONALITY TRAITS AND MOTIVATIONS OF OVERSEAS INTERNSHIP

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Abstract:

Overseas workers is a new and very popular activities in a short time to experience the activities of foreign lifestyle, the people involved can work salary to pay part of the cost of living, and the use of non-work time (leisure time) to make their own arrangements tourism activities, experience, and integrated into local life. Overseas internships for students can be rewarding experiences that dramatically change the perspectives of globalization and visions. Taiwan Ministry of Education (MOE) provided university students with overseas internships from 2008. This study used questionnaire, and 131 students who had participated overseas internship were collected in October, 2011. There were 29.0 % male and 71.0 % female. The countries of overseas internship where 78.6 % of the students went to were Australia and the United States because English is spoken there and most students in Taiwan learn English as a foreign language. The results showed that students with the trait of motivation looking for excitement also possess the personality traits of agreeableness, openness to experience. While the students with the trait of self-satisfaction own the personality traits of extraversion, agreeableness, and openness to experience.

Keywords: overseas internship, personality traits, motivations, confirmatory factor analysis.

1. INTRODUCTION

Travelling can make people own vision, broaden one's personal life, open a window to outside world. Today, more and more students have had the opportunity to go abroad or to work overseas, experiencing the different cultures. Especially, when a person is traveling alone, he can observe this world from a different perspective, get more practical experience, as well as enjoy the excitement of adventure. When a person is away from his familiar place and is faced with an unfamiliar situation, he has only himself to rely on, therefore, working overseas can fully develop one's potential.

Overseas working is a new and very popular activity among students in a short time because students can experience a very different foreign lifestyle. The people involved can make some money to pay for part of their cost of living, at the same time they can go traveling around after work, trying to integrate their life into the locals.

In Western countries it has long been popular for young people to make use of their spare time traveling around the world by themselves. Especially in the UK, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, U.S. and other countries, young people graduating from high school will go abroad, and this is usually called "Gap Year".

However, overseas internships involve unknown risks and challenges through a process of exploring one's potentials. In a relatively conservative country like Taiwan both students and their parents will have doubts and concerns about overseas internship. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to understand these university students' personality traits, motivations of overseas internship, and their relationships. The results intend to provide students who want to engage in overseas internships as well as the teachers the opportunities to evaluate if these students are the best candidates.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Overseas Internship

Overseas internships for students can be rewarding experiences that would dramatically change their perspectives of globalization and visions. Taiwan Ministry of Education (MOE) provided university students with overseas internships from 2008. The pilot overseas internships, sponsored by the MOE Taiwan, are intended to subsidize those students to gain experiences in an overseas enterprise or professional institute. Those students are selected by their university. The goal of the program is to give recipients opportunities to conduct practical training in an overseas enterprise or institute and extend their vision.

2.2. Personality Traits

In the past many research conclusions support the use of personality by the five-factor model. Costa & McCrae (1992) study is particularly important, proposing the five personality dimensions, and extensive reference for follow-up research. The five-factor model has emerged as possibly the most widely accepted way to describe personality structure. The popularity of this model is attributable to its parsimony and heuristic value in unifying personality structure and to the substantiated of the structure across different countries and researches. The Big Five factors (or Five Factor Model; FFM) of personality are openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness and neuroticism.

- *Openness to experience: Appreciation for art, emotion, adventure, unusual ideas, curiosity, and variety of experience.*
- *Conscientiousness: A tendency to show self-discipline, act dutifully, and aim for achievement; planned rather than spontaneous behavior.*
- *Extraversion: Energy, positive emotions, surgency, and the tendency to seek stimulation in the company of others.*
- *Agreeableness: A tendency to be compassionate and cooperative rather than suspicious and antagonistic towards others.*
- *Neuroticism: A tendency to experience unpleasant emotions easily, such as anger, anxiety, depression, or vulnerability.*

2.3. Motivations to Overseas Internship

In psychology, the definition of motivation is evolved with two concepts, which are the behavior of individual outside activities, the motivation is to promote the individual activities of the internal process. Therefore, the motivation is caused by individual external behavior, which is usually the reflection of a person's inner calls. The motivation is served as a starting point, triggering the physical and mental activities. So, a strongly motivated person can reach his or her goal more easily than others.

There are many researches in tourism motivation. But, the field in motivation to overseas internship has not been explored as much as we expect. According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory and the findings of the travel motivations, the motivations to overseas internship, include relaxation, looking for excitement, social expanding, visiting and learning, novelty and self-realization.

- *Relaxation: People leave their familiar places to settle into another place to stay for a short period of time, so that the body and mind can relax, rest and recover from boredom.*
- *Looking for Excitement: People go to new places to experience different cultures, life and to seek new sensations.*
- *Social Expanding: People make friends through traveling, exchanging interpersonal relationship.*
- *Visiting and Learning: People can obtain new knowledge, develop their potential by traveling in different culture.*
- *Novelty and Self-Realization: People get the truths or experiences to self-realization and spiritual values in different daily encounters.*

3. METHODOLOGY

This study used questionnaire, the questionnaire included 3 parts: (1) personal information, overseas internship sites; (2) the five personality traits items; and (3) motivations of overseas internships. Statistical analysis was conducted using SPSS software. Descriptive statistics were used to understand the distribution of students' demographic data. Second, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was adopted to know the factors of personality traits and motivations of overseas internship. Finally, canonical analysis was applied to analyse the relationship between personality traits and motivations of overseas internship.

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) is theory or hypothesis driven. With CFA it is possible to place substantively meaningful constraints on the factor model. Researchers can specify the number of factors or set the effect of one latent variable on observed variables to particular

values. On the other hand, canonical analysis is used to assess the relationship between two sets of variables.

Participant students were collected through university departments, study tour agents and internet search, a total number of 150. There are some failure questionnaires, and 131 valid questionnaires. The participants' demographics were shown as Table 1. There were 29.0 % male and 71.0 % female. Due to the Taiwan government military regulations, male college students going abroad are limited, so the participant students are mostly women. In addition, 38 graduated students accounted for 29 % of all. The countries of overseas internship where 78.6 % of the students went to were Australia and the United States because English is spoken there and most students in Taiwan learn English as a foreign language.

Table 1: Participants' demographics (N=131)

Item	Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	38	29.0
	Female	93	71.0
Grade	Freshman	14	10.7
	Sophomore	24	18.3
	Junior	29	22.1
	Senior	26	19.8
	Graduated	38	29.0
Overseas Internship	Australia	56	42.7
	United States	47	35.9
	Other Countries	28	21.4

4. ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Using CFA, the results in Table 2 indicate that the composite reliability of all scales exceeds the 0.5 thresholds for acceptable reliability. The convergent validity was established if all indicator loadings were statistically significant and greater than 0.5. The total variance explained of personality traits and motivations of overseas internship were 76.510 %, 77.869 %, which showed these factors could explain the variances.

Table 2: CFA on Personality Traits and Motivations of Overseas Internship

Factor	Mean	Eigenvalue	Variance explained (%)
Personality Traits total variance explained = 76.510%			
Extraversion	4.136	4.717	39.310
Conscientiousness	3.972	1.488	12.398
Agreeableness	3.740	1.227	10.225
Openness to Experience	3.684	0.905	7.541
Emotional Stability	2.720	0.844	7.036
Motivations of Overseas Internship total variance explained = 77.869%			
Looking for Excitement	4.675	7.085	50.604
Novelty and Self-Satisfaction	4.425	1.378	9.841
Relaxation	3.970	1.030	7.356
Visiting and Learning	3.899	0.786	5.613
Social Expanding	3.884	0.624	4.455

The mean for extraversion was on top of the list of personality traits, followed by conscientiousness, agreeableness, which are 4.316, 3.972, 3.740 respectively. The mean for looking for excitement ranked the highest for motivation, followed by novelty and self-satisfaction, relaxation. The means for these three factors are 4.675, 4.425, 3.970.

The student's personality traits to participate in overseas internships were mainly extraversion, conscientiousness and agreeableness. Therefore, the students' motivations to participate in overseas internships were mostly looking for excitement, novelty and self-satisfaction.

Table 3 showed the correlation matrix between personality traits and motivations of overseas internship. Motivation looking for excitement was statistically significant with personality traits of agreeableness, openness to experience. Motivation novelty and self-satisfaction was statistically significant with personality traits of extraversion, agreeableness, openness to experience.

This means that students with the trait of motivation looking for excitement also possess the personality traits of agreeableness, openness to experience. While the students with the trait of self-satisfaction own the personality traits of extraversion, agreeableness, and openness to experience.

Table 3: Correlation matrix between Personality Traits and Motivations of Overseas Internship

Subscale	Looking for Excitement	Novelty and Self-Satisfaction	Relaxation	Visiting and Learning	Social Expanding
Extraversion	0.030	0.395***	0.182**	0.133	0.114
Conscientiousness	0.137	0.004	0.061	0.016	0.001
Agreeableness	0.214**	0.212**	0.117	0.123	0.007
Openness to Experience	0.397***	0.159*	0.051	0.016	0.178**
Emotional Stability	0.091	0.143	0.208**	0.319***	0.120

*p<0.1, **p<0.05, ***p<0.01

5. CONCLUSION

The number of students going abroad, working by the overseas travel, working holiday and overseas internship has been increasing recently. Many young people also like to participate in such plans, but many factors should be taken into consideration, such as the ability to adapt to the local standard of living, lifestyle even the weather conditions. According to some experts, before a student makes a decision to go abroad, working by the overseas, he or she really has to think carefully if this kind of lifestyle suits him or her. And the most important thing is to understand whether he has such personality traits as mentioned before, instead of following other people's footsteps.

Following the conclusions of this study, overseas workers' nature of personality traits were extraversion, conscientiousness and agreeableness. They wanted to get to know more about other countries culture, scenery, and customs, etc. Besides, travel youth workers were easy to get along with people. The qualities such as trust and friendliness make them collaborate with other young people more easily.

The most importance motivations of Overseas Internship were "looking for excitement", "novelty and self-satisfaction", and "Relaxation". Obviously, to travel abroad is something most young people dream about. By overseas internship, students could make some money and most importantly, they are provided with the opportunities to experience different culture, appreciate the scenery by the most economical way.

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