THE RELATIONSHIP OF TAIWANESE UNIVERSITY
STUDENTS’ PERSONALITY TRAITS, MOTIVATIONS ON
OVERSEAS INTERNSHIP AND THEIR ACHIEVEMENTS

HSIANG-YUNG FENG Institute of Economic and Social
Studies, College of Hakka Studies,
National United University, Taiwan,
R.O.C.
E-mail: hyfeng@nuu.edu.tw

ABSTRACT
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. 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 extroversion, agreeableness, and openness to
experience. Integrated achievement of overseas internship was in relation to
personality traits, although intrinsic achievement had relations with
motivation.

KEY WORDS
Overseas Internship, Personality Traits, Motivations on Overseas Internship

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J 24, J 28, J 44.

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 them. 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".

Overseas experience is a world-wide phenomenon, but has special significance in Australia and New Zealand, where it is undertaken as a “rite of passage” by many young people (Kerr and Barbara, 2003). Tokyo Institute of Technology’s study showed that overseas internship program prompts graduate students to acquire new skills and awareness levels, including an enhanced meta-level understanding of the importance and complexity of human communications (Kayoko, Michael, Miki, and Osamu, 2008). Many articles and researches of overseas internship had positivity function for young students.

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.

LITERATURE REVIEW

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.

Motivations on 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, such as Jou and Wu (2003), Chen and Wu (2005), Chen (2006), Yen, Huang and Chang (2010). 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.

Achievement of Overseas Internship

Overseas internships for students can be rewarding experiences that dramatically change the perspectives of globalization and visions. According to Jenkins (2000), the opinion of individual traveller for travel includes socializing new friends and local people, taking in the custom of a place, and knowing and experiencing dissimilar surroundings. Gray and Stebbins (2002) pointed out short-term learning overseas experiences connect the on-colleges schemes and course turn pupils towards numerous destinations of the global task.

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.

This study about achievement of overseas internship was divided into intrinsic and extrinsic two parts. Intrinsic achievement included five items: try new things, experience different cultures, broaden their horizons, become independent and confident. Extrinsic achievement included three items: know many foreign friends, social interaction with expatriates, understand the foreign work environment. These items about achievement of overseas internship were appraised by participant student self.

METHODS

Research Model and Hypothesis

Based on literature reviews and the objective of this study, research model shows the relationships among personality traits, motivations and achievement of overseas internship (Figure 1). And, three hypotheses have been developed based on the three relationships identified in the previous section:

H1: There are some relationships between personality traits and motivations on overseas internship.

H2a: There are some relationships between personality traits and achievement of overseas internship.

H2b: There are some relationships between motivations and achievement of overseas internship.

Figure 1: Research Model

Survey Administration and Sampling

This study used questionnaire, the questionnaire included 4 parts: (1) personal information, overseas internship sites; (2) personality traits; (3) motivations on overseas internships; and (4) achievement of overseas internship. The personality traits had 12 questions, included five characteristics: openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness and neuroticism. The motivations on overseas internships had 14 questions, divided into five factors: relaxation, looking for excitement, social expanding, visiting and learning, novelty and self-realization. Therefore, achievement of overseas internship covered by intrinsic, extrinsic evaluation two parts. The achievement of overseas internship
was appraised by participant student self. Intrinsic achievement included five items: try new things, experience different cultures, broaden their horizons, become independent and confident. Extrinsic achievement included three items: know many foreign friends, social interaction with expatriates, understand the foreign work environment.

Participant students were collected through university departments, study tour agents and internet search, a total number of 150. Survey was taken on October, 2011. There are 19 not answered or invalid questionnaires, and 131 valid questionnaires. Returns-ratio was 87.3%. 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.

Data Analysis

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 correlation between two sets of variables. The most widely used type of canonical analysis is Pearson correlation coefficient, which is also referred to as linear or product-moment correlation. Correlation coefficient is a term that refers to the strength of a relationship between two variables. A strong, or high, correlation means that two or more variables have a strong relationship with each other while a weak, or low, correlation means that the variables are hardly related.

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

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.

The mean for extraversion was on top of the list of personality traits, followed by conscientiousness, agreeableness, which are 4.316, 3.972, and 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, and 3.970. However, the means for intrinsic and extrinsic achievement of overseas internship are 4.572, 4.167.

The student’s personality traits to participate in overseas internships were mainly extraversion, conscientiousness and agreeableness. The students' motivations to participate in overseas internships were mostly looking for excitement, novelty and self-satisfaction. Therefore, personal intrinsic achievement of overseas internship was higher than extrinsic achievement.

Table 1: Participants’ demographics  (N=131)

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

Table 2: Confirmatory Factor Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Eigenvalue</th>
<th>Variance explained (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personality Traits total variance explained = 76.510%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extraversion</td>
<td>4.136</td>
<td>4.717</td>
<td>39.310</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conscientiousness</td>
<td>3.972</td>
<td>1.488</td>
<td>12.398</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agreeableness</td>
<td>3.740</td>
<td>1.227</td>
<td>10.225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Openness to Experience</td>
<td>3.684</td>
<td>0.905</td>
<td>7.541</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Emotional Stability 2.720 0.844 7.036

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Motivations of Overseas Internship total variance explained = 77.869%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Looking for Excitement 4.675 7.085 50.604</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Novelty and Self-Satisfaction 4.425 1.378 9.841</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relaxation 3.970 1.030 7.356</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visiting and Learning 3.899 0.786 5.613</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Expanding 3.884 0.624 4.455</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Achievement of Overseas Internship total variance explained = 67.746%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intrinsic Achievement 4.572 7.132 50.945</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extrinsic Achievement 4.167 1.356 16.801</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Canonical Analysis**

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 4 showed the correlation matrix between personality traits, motivations and achievement of overseas internship. Intrinsic achievement of overseas internship was statistically significant with extraversion, openness to experience, and emotional stability of personality traits. It was statistically significant with all variables of motivations but relaxation. As for extrinsic achievement of overseas internship, it was statistically significant with openness to experience of personality traits, and looking for excitement, relaxation of motivations.

This means that intrinsic achievement of students was significant correlation with their personality traits and motivations on overseas internship. While the students with the trait of extraversion, openness to experience, emotional stability got higher intrinsic achievement. Similarly, the students with the motivations of looking for excitement, novelty and self-satisfaction, visiting and learning, social expanding could get higher intrinsic achievement.
Table 3: Correlation matrix between Personality Traits and Motivations on Overseas Internship

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

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

Table 4: Correlation matrix between Personality Traits, Motivations and Achievement of Overseas Internship

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Intrinsic Achievement</th>
<th>Extrinsic Achievement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personality Traits</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extraversion</td>
<td>0.357***</td>
<td>0.143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conscientiousness</td>
<td>-0.114</td>
<td>0.104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agreeableness</td>
<td>-0.111</td>
<td>-0.017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Openness to Experience</td>
<td>0.213**</td>
<td>0.273***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Stability</td>
<td>0.240***</td>
<td>0.097</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivations on Overseas Internship</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Looking for Excitement</td>
<td>0.280***</td>
<td>0.273***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Novelty and Self-Satisfaction</td>
<td>0.194**</td>
<td>0.068</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relaxation</td>
<td>0.039</td>
<td>0.471***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visiting and Learning</td>
<td>0.209**</td>
<td>-0.035</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Expanding</td>
<td>0.209***</td>
<td>-0.035</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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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, Busby (2002) identified the aims: (1) to experience employment and, where appropriate, accept responsibility for the completion of tasks and the supervision of others, (2) to obtain an insight into management and management methods, (3) to gain greater maturity and self-confidence, (4) to be involved in the diagnosis and solution of problems, (5) to develop attitudes and standards appropriate to career aspirations.

But, many factors will 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, not just 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 importance motivations on 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.

The results of this study indicate that students get intrinsic achievement more than extrinsic achievement. These intrinsic achievements were positive significant with personality traits and motivations on overseas internship. All of participants could get some achievement from overseas internship and denoted the pilot overseas internship by the MOE Taiwan was very helpful. Consequently, not only Taiwan but also many countries in the world supply their young student opportunity of internship abroad. Their objectives are promoting young people’s learning and career development. The results of the study supply the objectives of overseas internship.

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REFERENCE


