American College Students’ Study Abroad Destination Choices: Hedonic or Utilitarian Motivation?*

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<Abstract>

This study explores which motivation factors affect college students’ decision when choosing a study abroad destination. It also investigates whether students’ experiences during their time abroad affect their future travel choices. Using an online survey method, seven hundred and sixty six responses were collected from students attending four-year educational institutions in the United States. Factor analysis, logistic regression, and multiple regressions were used to analyze motivation attributes, destination choice, and study abroad experience. The major finding of this study is that the safety needs of destination is a precondition of students’ hedonic needs when they select the study abroad destination, respondents’ study abroad experiences positively affected tourists’ intention to revisit the same destination, and students who perceived the relaxed environment of the destination would be less likely to revisit the same destination in the future but students who favourably perceived cultural attraction needs, utilitarian needs, hedonic needs, and safety needs would come back to the same destination.

Key Words: Study abroad, Destination image, Utilitarian, Intention to visit, Hedonic motivation

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I. Introduction

Many countries have been recommending study abroad program to their college students to experience other culture because study abroad programs are well known for conjoining tourism and learning and they provide students with chances to learn, understand different cultures, and involve a destination’s different hospitality and tourism activities (Kim 2016). In addition, study abroad programs brings the host community considerable revenues since visiting students spend money on various products and services (Kim, 2016; Michael, Armstrong, & King, 2003). Mattila, Apostolopoulos, Sonmez, Yu, and Sasidharan (2001) commented that the college student market has grown to be a potentially viable and lucrative target for many hospitality and tourism providers, especially when study abroad students stay at a foreign destination for a prolonged period of time beyond their spring and summer vacations and therefore contribute more to the local economy than do pleasure tourists who stay for only a short period of time (Kim 2016; Michael, et al., 2003).

Study abroad students’ multifaceted experiences at their visited destinations have a lasting impact on their perceptions of the destinations and build destination loyalty based on their travel experiences (Lehto, O’Leary, & Morrison, 2004). These experiences may influence their travel choices later in life. Their exposure to the destination also contributes to word-of-mouth marketing as they share their travel experiences with friends and families, and word-of-mouth is one of the most reliable sources of information for potential tourists (Bazaarvoice, 2012; Chi & Qu, 2008). For these reasons, study abroad program for college students
are becoming sizable and profitable market, and it is important for tourism marketers to understand study abroad students’ needs and wants. It is worth finding out what motivates college students to choose a certain destination and what destination attributes attract students and influence them to revisit the same destination as tourists in the future.

At this token, the purpose of this study is to explore what motivates college students to select their particular study abroad destinations and what experiences at the destinations affect their choice to return later. The results of this study may not fully address the concerns of some authors who argue that destination choice behaviour has not been researched over the life span of an individual (Oppermann, 1998), but this study may provide some insights by analyzing the longer term impact of study abroad experiences by using cross-sectional data.

II. Literature Review

1. Study Abroad Programs in the United States

According to the Institute of International Education (IIE) funded by the U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, international study is an essential part of preparing for a successful career in a globally interdependent world (IIE, 2008). Study abroad programs offered by many American colleges are the school recognized credit program, which students are staying abroad from 2 weeks to 16 weeks during summer break or semesters by taking classes or travelling the destination. Because one in six U.S. jobs is tied to international relation,
and U.S. companies emphasize hiring employees with multi-cultural experience in many positions (Nyaupane, Paris, & Teye, 2011), study abroad programs can simultaneously give students international experiences and help students to better understand different cultures (Min & Kim, 2013). American colleges are providing more opportunities for students to have an international experience and more American students have been taking advantage of such opportunities and enrolling in study abroad programs offered by their colleges. During the 2012-2013 academic year, 289,408 American college students received credits for their participation in study abroad programs, a 2.1% increase from the previous year (IIE, 2014). In terms of destination choices, even though Europe continued to host the largest share of U.S. students (53.0%), IIE (2014) reported that American students are more frequently choosing non-traditional study abroad destinations such as Brazil, China, Latin American and Caribbean countries, Sub-Saharan Africa, and Oceania. This increase is fuelled in part by a growth in new program opportunities, partnerships between U.S. and foreign higher education institutions, and a range of fields and program durations to accommodate the needs of an increasingly diverse study abroad population (IIE, 2014).

Even though the vast majority of current research on the effect of study abroad programs focuses on language skills acquired by students (Segalowitz & Freed, 2004) or the psychosocial development of participants (Wortman, 2002), some studies have reported significant socio-cultural gains from study abroad programs (Norris & Gillespie, 2009). Specifically, many study abroad participants have reported that study abroad programs increased their maturity and self-confidence, enabled them to understand different cultures, and had a lasting impact on
their world view (IES, 2002). Much research has shown that study abroad programs tremendously influence participating students, but little research has been undertaken to explore study abroad programs’ implications for tourism, such as participants’ image of their destination, travel motivation, and its impact on destination choices. Therefore, this study investigates the factors that appeal to students and which factors they consider when they choose study abroad programs and destinations.

2. Travel Motivations

Consumer behaviour of tourists has long been an interest of both researchers and marketers in the tourism industry. Researchers and marketers have tried to understand consumers’ complex behaviours through various constructs to explain how consumers make decisions. In addition, Kay (2003) explained that “over the last 30 years, the travel and tourism literature has been replete with articles that attempt to explain why people travel or why tourists participate in particular activities” (p. 600). Kay (2003) classified consumer motivation in a tourism context into four different motivation theories: needs-based motivation, value-based motivation, benefit sought or realized, and expectancy theory. According to Kay (2003), need-based motivation theory adapts Maslow’s hierarchical needs theory and assumes that the consumer chooses the destination that best satisfies his/her needs (Singh, 2008). Many researchers have used measurements of personal values based on the Rokeach Value Survey to segment travel/leisure benefits (Ekinci & Chen, 2002; Madrigal & Kahle, 1994; Pitts & Woodside, 1986) these benefits were originally defined by Crompton (1979) by using visitors’ ratings of desired amenities and
activities (Kay, 2003). Witt and Wright’s (1992) expectancy theory of tourist motivation emphasized the relationship between motivation, preference, and choice (Kay, 2003). Another approach to the motivations underlying tourist and visitation behaviour is the push and pull framework. In this framework, “push factors refer to the specific forces that influence a person’s decision to take a vacation, while pull factors refer to the forces that influence the person’s choice of a specific destination (Kim, Lee, & Klenosky, 2003: 170).” Since Crompton’s initial research (1979) was published, many studies have attempted to identify push and pull motivational factors in different settings such as nationalities, destinations, and events (Baloglu & Uysal, 1996; Jang & Wu, 2006). Many researchers have identified two to four broad domains of push factors, namely, family togetherness, appreciating natural resources, escaping from mundane life, and adventure and building friendship; and the pull factors identified by many researchers vary, but can include social opportunities and attractions, natural and cultural amenities, accommodations and transportation, infrastructure, foods, friendly people, physical amenities and recreation activities, and bars and evening entertainment (Fakeye & Crompton, 1991; Hu & Ritchie, 1993; Kim, et al., 2003; Turnbull & Uysal, 1995). Recent researchers argue that the personal motives (push motives) and the characteristics of the tourism destination (pull motives) together determine tourists’ perceptions. These motives interact in a dynamic and evolving context (Correira, 2000) and explain tourist decisions (McCabe, 2000), but “a person’s perceptions of a destination can be different from its true attributes, depending on how the individual receives and processes information about the destination (Mohammad & Som, 2010: 42).”

Many other factors and concepts have also been identified as relevant to
tourist motivation, including emotions (Gnoth, 1997; Hosany & Gilbert, 2010; Jang & Namkung, 2009), novelty (Crompton, 1979), authenticity (Gnoth, 1997; Sharpley, 1994), hedonism (Krippendorf, 1984) and the role of preferences (Lang & O’Leary, 1997; McCool & Reilly, 1993). In particular, Kay (2003) emphasized that hedonic consumption research has focused on desires to experience emotion and desires for leisure activities. Many studies have shown that tourism is directly related to hedonic desires. For example, Bruwer and Alant (2009) found wine tourists’ motivation to be predominantly hedonic in nature. Snepenger, Snepenger, Dalbey, and Wessol (2007) found that tourism destinations can be differentiated in terms of their normative hedonic, utilitarian, social, and consumption meanings because different places play distinct roles in people’s lives. Hosany and Gilbert (2010) investigated the role of emotions and found that high-tourism-demand destinations generate high hedonic meanings, which can be described by terms such as delightful, fun, thrilling, playful, enjoyable, cheerful, and amusing; in contrast, low-tourism-demand places have high utilitarian meanings but are the least hedonic. Chen and Schwartz (2010) investigated the relationship motivation and hotel customers’ risk perception and concluded that when customers perceive low risk, utilitarian motivation affects customers’ choices more strongly than hedonic motivation does; but when the level of risk perception reaches a certain point, hedonic motivation becomes the strongest factor. Josiam and Henry (2014) argued that when patrons choose a restaurant, they not only want a good meal (utilitarian motive) but also a pleasant experience (hedonic motive). Jang and Namkung (2009) examined the relationship between perceived quality, emotions, and
behavioral intentions, and concluded that emotions mediate between perceived quality and consumer behavioral intentions. Hosany and Gilbert (2010) also concluded that joy is an important dimension of tourists’ emotional experiences and is a key determinant of satisfaction. Similarly, a recent study of hotel guests by Johnson, Olsen, and Andreassen (2009) found that joy was a strong and positive driver of customer satisfaction. In addition, Qu and Qu (2015) emphasized the non-utilitarian nature of a destination choice using a model positing that tourists’ non-utilitarian consumption drives their destination preference and choice because they consider tourism destinations to have a high level of experiential qualities and symbolic values.

Likewise, when pleasure tourists select the destination for their vacation, they may decide the destination based on their hedonic motivation or non-utilitarian consumption needs. Can the same theory be applied to college student tourist groups? It is not clear whether college students choose study abroad destinations based on their hedonic motivation or on their utilitarian motivation. Previous studies have found that two of the primary reasons that students participate in study abroad programs are to build social networks and to acquire a second language, both of which are more utilitarian consumption needs than hedonic motives (Isabelli-Garcia, 2006). Clements and Josiam (1995) examined the relationship between college students’ level of involvement with a destination and their decision-making process for spring break destinations. They confirmed that college students who travelled to a spring break destination had a higher level of involvement than did non-tourists. Beatty and Smith (1987) extended the relationship between the level of involvement and travel motivation and examined the linkage between travellers’ inherent and
extrinsic motivations. They concluded that push factors motivate individuals to make a trip, and pull factors, or hedonic types of destination specific attributes, motivate them to choose a specific destination. Study abroad programs involve prolonged travel for students, typically lasting from two weeks to one semester; so when students decide to study abroad, they may be motivated by utilitarian push factors, but when they need to select a specific study abroad destination, they may be influenced by hedonic pull factors. Therefore, it is worthwhile to find out whether the hedonic consumption needs of college students are main determinants when they choose a study abroad destination.

3. Travel Experience and Visiting Intention

Destination elements play an essential role in effective target marketing (Tasci, Gartner, & Cavusgil, 2007). Destinations with strongly positive attributes are more likely to be chosen by tourists (Echtner & Ritchie, 2003; Kim, 2016; Kim, Hallab, & Kim, 2012). Among many destination attributes, one of the most influential factors is actually visiting a destination; this factor creates an image that is more realistic than the one that existed prior to visitation (Gartner, 1993; Gunn, 1972), is a strong full factor for consumers to include the destination in their consideration set (Woodside & Lysonski, 1989), and leads to a much more diversified and detailed demand for level of awareness (Oppermann, 1998). This realistic image affects information processing in that people remember and fit their beliefs or feelings to their image of the destination (Hewstone & Brown, 1986). Thus, information processing related to destination image is a prominent aspect of the cognitive dimension in shaping destination image
(Min & Kim, 2013), and this image plays an important role as a pull motivation to attract tourists to the destination. Many researchers have confirmed that more extensive and positive experiences at a destination may directly influence future destination choices (Morgan & Pritchard, 1998; Oppermann, 1998). People who have previously visited a destination have more loyalty than first-time visitors do, participate more frequently in traveling activities (Lehto, O’Leary, & Morrison, 2004), are more likely to contribute to word-of-mouth advertising (Zhang, Fu, Cai & Lu, 2014), and demonstrate satisfaction and revisit intention (Morgan & Pritchard, 1998).

Michael, Armstrong and King (2003) investigated the relationship between studying abroad and the choice of tourist destinations and concluded that study abroad experience enhanced the intention to return to the same destination. Other factors that are related to students’ choice to participate in study abroad programs may include interest in foreign countries as a travel destination and interest in other cultures (Yashima, 2010). Cross-cultural attitudes include both affective and behavioural components. The affective dimension of cultural attitude toward foreign countries is related to feelings one may have toward another culture and is based on one’s emotional experiences and preferences (Kwon & Vogt, 2010). The behavioural components of cross-cultural attitudes refer to action-oriented behaviour toward another culture (Min & Kim, 2013). Therefore, study abroad programs could positively affect participants’ image formation of the destination, build stronger hedonic memories of and connections with the destination, and lead to possible revisits.

Little previous research has provided information about study abroad destination choices: whether the motivation for the destination choice is hedonic or utilitarian in nature, and whether study abroad experience
encourages students to return to the same destination. In addition, few previous studies have explored which motivation factors are most likely to influence students to return to the same destination in the future. In this context, the following hypotheses are proposed and relationships associated are proposed in <Figure 1>:

H1: Students participate in study abroad programs based on their hedonic consumption needs.

H2: A study abroad experience positively affects participants’ intention to revisit the same destination.

H3: Hedonic motivation is the strongest factor that influences intent to return to a destination.

<Figure 1> Proposed Model
III. Research Method

A questionnaire was designed to ask respondents about the following: motivations to study abroad, asking respondents to rate the factors that they would consider when choosing a destination based on a series of descriptors, intention to visit/revisit the study abroad destination, and socio-demographic information. The study abroad motivation items and the destination image attributes were measured by asking respondents to rate a tourist destination based on a series of descriptors. These descriptors were derived from previous researchers’ questions during the literature review (Beerli & Martin, 2004; Bonn, Joseph, & Dai, 2005; Echtner & Ritchie, 1991, 1993, 2003) and revised to fit the college population. Respondents were asked to click on a scale from one to five that best reflected their motivation to study abroad and their perception of the destination attributes, with one being “strongly disagree” and five being “strongly agree.” The data were collected from four-year college students in the United States via an online survey. A list of about 35,000 college students’ email addresses was obtained from a private marketing company and used to contact survey participants. Subjects were provided with a solicitation letter and a hyperlink to the online questionnaire. As an incentive for participation, respondents were entered into a drawing for a cash prize. A follow-up reminder email was sent out one week after the initial contact. Seven days after the second email notification, the survey process ended with 766 valid responses. Among them, 145 respondents answered that they had one or more experiences with study abroad.
IV. Data Analysis and Results

The data were analyzed in three steps. The first step was to compile a descriptive profile of respondents and general information about the destination image based on demographic characteristics. In the second step, exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was employed in order to reduce the number of motivation descriptors and destination attributes descriptors to a smaller number of latent constructs. In the final step, logistic regression (LR) was performed to verify the most influential factor in selecting a study abroad destination. Chi-square analysis was used to find out the relationship between the study abroad experience and participants’ likelihood of returning to the same destination in the future. In the logistic regression, participation in a study abroad program was used as a binary dependent variable. Destination image and motivation constructs, delineated through factor analysis, were used as independent variables. The destination motivation factors that most attracted respondents in this study were compared with those identified in previous motivation studies. All statistical research methods were followed the procedure adopted from Hair, Black, Babin and Anderson’s study (2010).

The demographic characteristics of respondents showed that approximately 57.0% were female and 67.0% were between the ages of 18 and 25. About 80.0% of respondents were single, 43.0% had annual household incomes under $20,000, and about 92.0% were American citizens. Approximately 41.0% were of junior or senior status at their schools <Table 1>. 
<Table 1> Demographic Characteristics

|                | Frequency | Percent of Total |
|----------------|-----------|------------------|
| **Gender**     |           |                  |
| Male           | 331       | 43.3             |
| Female         | 433       | 56.7             |
| **Age**        |           |                  |
| 18 - 25        | 508       | 66.6             |
| 26 - 35        | 144       | 18.9             |
| 36 - 45        | 63        | 8.3              |
| 46 - 55        | 37        | 4.8              |
| 56 - 65        | 9         | 1.2              |
| Over 65        | 2         | 0.3              |
| **Marital status** |      |                  |
| Single         | 613       | 80.1             |
| Married        | 136       | 17.8             |
| Separated      | 6         | .8               |
| Widower        | 2         | .3               |
| Decline to answer | 8     | 1.0              |
| **Residency**  |           |                  |
| In-state       | 601       | 78.6             |
| USA but out of State | 100    | 13.1             |
| Country other than USA | 64   | 8.4              |
| **Household income** |   |                  |
| Under $20,000  | 327       | 42.7             |
| $20,001 - 40,000 | 81     | 10.6             |
| $40,001 - 60,000 | 53     | 6.9              |
| $60,001 - 80,000 | 51     | 6.7              |
| $80,001 - 100,000 | 52    | 6.8              |
| Over $100,000  | 45        | 5.9              |
| Decline to answer | 157    | 20.5             |
| **Current status** |          |                  |
| Freshmen       | 103       | 13.5             |
| Sophomore      | 103       | 13.5             |
| Junior         | 153       | 20.0             |
| Senior         | 157       | 20.5             |
| Master student | 105       | 13.7             |
| Ph.D. students | 72        | 9.4              |
| Others         | 72        | 9.4              |
<Table 2> shows the study abroad experience of respondents. About 19.0% of respondents had participated in study abroad programs. The major reason (54.0%) for joining study abroad programs was to fulfil their curiosity about the destination. Around 42.0% of respondents who had participated in study abroad programs chose European countries as their destinations, 18.0% of them selected South America, and about 11.0% of them chose Asia. Reasons for selecting the destinations were as follows: historical value (21.0%), recommended by friends (13.0%), recommended by professors (8.4%), and suitable for the budget and time (8.4%). It should be noted that a sizeable majority of respondents chose the destination because of their curiosity about the destination or because of its historical value, both of which are hedonic motivations.

Most respondents who had participated in study abroad programs reported that their programs lasted five to eight weeks, followed by those whose program lasted more than one semester. About 37.0% of respondents mentioned that they spent $3,000 to $6,000 on the study abroad program, while 28.0% spent less than $3,000 <Table 2>.

<Table 2> Study Abroad Experience among Respondents

| Participated Study Abroad Program | Frequency | Percent of Total |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|------------------|
| Yes                               | 145       | 19               |
| No                                | 619       | 81               |
| The Reason for Joining Study Abroad |           |                  |
| A part of study major             | 8         | 5.2              |
| Out of curiosity                  | 82        | 53.6             |
| Recommendation from professors    | 15        | 9.8              |
| Recommendation from friends       | 13        | 8.5              |
| Advertising                       | 5         | 3.3              |
| Other                             | 30        | 19.6             |
As shown in <Table 3>, about 88.0% of respondents who had already participated in study abroad programs wanted to participate in similar programs again in the future. Around 71.0% of those who had never participated in a study abroad program said that they would like to do so. About 90.0% of respondents who had participated in a study abroad program mentioned that they would like to return to the same destination on a future leisure trip, whereas about 19.0% of respondents who had not
participated in a study abroad program mentioned that they would like to visit a destination in the future. This finding indicates that experiencing a study abroad program is significantly likely to lead to a higher interest in revisiting the same destination and confirmed the hypothesis 2: a study abroad experience positively affects participants’ intention to revisit the same destination <Table 3>.

<Table 3> Future Participation and Visiting Intention

| Study abroad participant (N=147) | Non-participant (N=623) | \( P^* \) |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------|---------|
|                                 | Frequency | Percent | Frequency | Percent |         |
| Are you going to join study abroad in the future? |           |         |           |         |         |
| Yes                             | 120       | 87.6    | 395       | 71.4    | \( \chi^2=15.2 \) |
| No                              | 17        | 12.8    | 158       | 28.6    | \( \alpha<0.005 \) |
| Are you going to visit/revisit the region (would be) studied? |           |         |           |         |         |
| Very unlikely                   | 6         | 4.2     | 102       | 18.1    | \( F=23.972 \) |
| Somewhat unlikely               | 5         | 3.5     | 180       | 31.9    | \( \alpha<0.0001 \) |
| Undecided                       | 5         | 3.5     | 173       | 30.7    | \( r=.377 \) |
| Likely                          | 30        | 20.8    | 75        | 13.3    |         |
| Very Likely                     | 98        | 68.1    | 34        | 6.0     |         |

\*P means statistically significant at \( \alpha=0.05 \).

To analyse what motivates students to participate in a study abroad experience, a factor analysis was conducted on 30 important motivation factors and destination attributes that are related to choosing a study abroad program. Before the factor analysis was conducted, the commonality and the correlation matrix for the scales of the motivation and destination image items were checked. Out of thirty items, three had a commonality of less
than .4 (good value for money, easy to get entry permit, and pleasant weather). After these three low commonality items were deleted, factor analysis was performed for the rest of the variables. The results confirmed that more than half of the coefficients of motivation and image variables were greater than the absolute value of .2, indicating a small percentage of non-trivial residuals. Most of the variables had a high correlation with at least one of the other variables in the scale; therefore, all 27 remaining motivation and image items were factor analysed. Varimax rotation for factor analysis was used to reduce items to a smaller number of underlying latent variables, resulting in more interpretable clusters of factors. The value of Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin for motivation and image items was .910, indicating enough significance to proceed with further analysis.

After double loading values (> .4) which loaded onto more than two constructs were deleted, the results showed that 23 items loaded saliently on any of the six factors in motivation and destination image variables with an eigenvalue greater than one. To verify reliability within factors, Cronbach’s alpha was used. The reliability alpha for variables was .83 for stability and safety needs (SSN), .83 for cultural attractiveness needs (CAN), .73 for utilitarian needs (UN), .71 for hedonic needs (HN), .53 for novelty needs (NN), and .67 for relaxed environment needs (REN). Although Nunnally (1978) suggested that reliabilities of .70 or higher should be used in the early stages of research on predictor tests or hypothesised measures of a construct, REN was kept for further analysis because its reliability value was .67, which is very close to .70. The reliability value for NN was .53, which is much less than Nunnally’s (1978) suggestion; therefore, this factor was excluded from further analysis. The factors accounted for 59.0% of the variance in the
motivation and image variables. Based on the sub-items of the motivation and image attributes, each factor was named and saved for further analysis <Table 4>.

<Table 4> Exploratory Factor analysis of Destination Image Attributes

| Factors                        | Loadings | Eigenvalue | Percentage of Variance Explained (%) | Reliability Alpha |
|--------------------------------|----------|------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Stability and Safety Needs     |          | 3.524      | 15.322                                | .830              |
| Stable political environment   | .821     |            |                                       |                   |
| Safety                         | .814     |            |                                       |                   |
| Clean and hygienic             | .690     |            |                                       |                   |
| Internationally accessible     | .659     |            |                                       |                   |
| Friendly relation with US      | .630     |            |                                       |                   |
| Available information         | .564     |            |                                       |                   |
| Cultural Attractiveness Needs  |          | 2.839      | 11.977                                | .833              |
| Interesting historical attraction | .823  |            |                                       |                   |
| Interesting cultural attraction| .817     |            |                                       |                   |
| Exciting place                 | .700     |            |                                       |                   |
| Attractive natural scenery     | .632     |            |                                       |                   |
| Utilitarian Needs              |          | 2.217      | 9.574                                 | .730              |
| It fits my budget              | .875     |            |                                       |                   |
| Costs                          | .845     |            |                                       |                   |
| Duration of the program        | .614     |            |                                       |                   |
| Recommended by previous visitors | .495  |            |                                       |                   |
| Hedonic Needs                  |          | 2.069      | 8.897                                 | .709              |
| Convenient public transportation| .726 |            |                                       |                   |
| Exciting night life            | .697     |            |                                       |                   |
| Quality shopping experience    | .655     |            |                                       |                   |
| Relaxed Environment Needs      |          | 1.739      | 7.521                                 | .670              |
| Unpolluted and unspoiled environ | .812  |            |                                       |                   |
| Relaxed place                  | .609     |            |                                       |                   |
| Great beaches and water sports | .604     |            |                                       |                   |
| Novelty Needs                  |          | 1.661      | 7.247                                 | .534              |
| The destination has historical value | .807  |            |                                       |                   |
| The challenge of the unknown world | .703 |            |                                       |                   |
| Geographical location          | .581     |            |                                       |                   |
| Total                          |          | 60.538     |                                       |                   |

Note: the above scales were coded from 1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree for the best describing motivation and image attribute of a destination.
Next, for Hypothesis 1 (H1), logistic regression was performed to find out which motivation variable most influenced students to participate in study abroad programs. Logistic regression was used because the dependent variables were measured by categorical value and the independent variables were measured by numeric value. In addition, logistic regression does not need to face the strict assumption of multivariate normality and equal variance-covariance, is much more robust when these assumptions are not met, and is equivalent to two-group discriminant analysis (Hair, et al., 2010). To test this relationship, participation in study abroad programs was used as the binary dependent variable and the five motivation factors delineated from the factor analysis were used as independent variables to determine which factor was the most efficient in discriminating between the study abroad participants. The results of the analysis showed that the coefficients of SSN were positive, its transformation (antilog) was greater than 1, and the predicted probability of participating in a study abroad program was increased. The estimated coefficient for SSN was .278 and the exp (B) was 1.313, indicating that students who had stability and safety needs were 1.31 times more likely to participate in a study abroad program. The coefficients of HN (hedonic needs) were .129 and the exp (B) were 1.137, indicating that students who had hedonic needs were 1.14 times more likely to participate in a study abroad program. However, the estimated coefficient of UN (utilitarian needs) was negative (-.143) and the antilog was less than one (.867), so the predicted probability of participating in a program based on UN was decreased. The estimated coefficient for REN was -.065 and the exp (B) was .937 indicating that students who had relaxed environmental needs were less likely to participate in a study abroad program. However,
the Wald statistic showed that SSN was the only estimated coefficient statistically significant, indicating that the odds that college students will participate in a study abroad program was only SSN variable. Even though the coefficient of HN was not statistically significant, it should be noted that the HN coefficient increased when the predicted probability of participating in a study abroad program increased and the predicted probability of not participating was reduced.<Table 5>.

<Table 5> Logistic Regression Analysis

| Variable | Beta  | SE    | Wals  | Exp(B) | DOF | Sig. |
|----------|-------|-------|-------|--------|-----|------|
| Constant | -1.205| .105  | 130.927| .300   | 1   | .000 |
| SSN      | .273  | .106  | 6.642 | 1.313  | 1   | .010*|
| CAN      | -.035 | .103  | .122  | .965   | 1   | .727 |
| UN       | -.143 | .100  | 2.030 | .867   | 1   | .154 |
| HN       | .129  | .103  | 1.577 | 1.137  | 1   | .209 |
| REN      | -.065 | .104  | .396  | .937   | 1   | .529 |

Note: SSN(Stability and Safety Needs), CAN(Cultural Attractiveness Needs), UN(Utilitarian Needs), HN(Hedonic Needs), REN(Relaxed Environment Needs), *Significant when α<0.05

<Table 6> Multiple Regression Analysis

| Variable | Beta  | SE    | sBeta | T value | Sig. |
|----------|-------|-------|-------|---------|------|
| Constant | 4.682 | .803  | .021  | .190    | .849 |
| SSN      | .034  | .178  | .021  | .190    | .849 |
| CAN      | .110  | .158  | .078  | .695    | .488 |
| UN       | .100  | .140  | .069  | .716    | .475 |
| HN       | .047  | .188  | .028  | .250    | .803 |
| REN      | -.432 | .204  | .212  | -2.114  | .037*|

Note: SSN(Stability and Safety Needs), CAN(Cultural Attractiveness Needs), UN(Utilitarian Needs), HN(Hedonic Needs), REN(Relaxed Environment Needs), *Significant when α<0.05
Therefore, H1 was partially supported. The results could be interpreted to mean that students participated in a study abroad program based on their hedonic consumption needs. Next, regression analysis for hypothesis 3 was performed to find out whether students who were motivated by hedonic consumption needs might be more likely to choose the same study abroad destination for future travel. The size of the sample was deemed adequate for the objective of the study and the assumptions were assessed for the individual variables. The likelihood of visiting the same destination in the future, measured by a Likert scale, was used as a metric dependent variable. The five motivation factors delineated from the factor analysis were used as independent variables <Table 6>. The results of the analysis showed the following model by a least squares procedure:

\[ Y = 4.682 + 0.034\text{SSN} + 0.110\text{CAN} + 0.100\text{UN} + 0.047\text{HN} - 0.432\text{REN} \]

Based on this equation, the expected return intention to the same study abroad destination was significantly but negatively influenced by REN. In contrast, the coefficients of the rest of the four variables were not statistically significant, but all positively influenced return intention. The results may indicate that students wanted to come back to the same destination because the destination met their cultural attraction needs, utilitarian needs, hedonic needs, and safety needs, but they were negatively impacted by relaxed environment needs.
V. Conclusions and Suggestions

The purpose of this study was to reveal whether participating in a study abroad program was influenced by students’ hedonic motivation, whether the study abroad experience positively influenced the students to choose the destination later in their life, and whether these hedonic motivation needs influenced participants’ intention to revisit the same destination in the future. The study results statistically disconfirmed H1, that students participate in study abroad programs based on their hedonic consumption needs, and H3, that hedonic motivation is the strongest factor influencing intention to return to the destination. However, the results confirmed that a study abroad experience positively affected tourists’ intention to revisit the same destination, as described in H2.

The study’s results did not statistically support H1; in fact, they contradicted some previous studies which indicated that a destination’s motivation factors significantly and positively influenced tourists’ future visit intention (Echtner & Ritchie, 2003) and a person’s decision making about future travel to the same destination (Beerli & Martin, 2004; Hallab & Kim, 2006). Even though the result did not confirm H1, it should be noted that the results of the study indicated that among five motivation factors to participate study abroad, only the stability and safety needs variable positively and significantly influenced students’ decision to participate in a study abroad program, and this result should be discussed in detail to find out the cause. These results suggest that when students try to decide whether to participate in a study abroad program, they may first consider stability and safety needs at the destination of study abroad.
program. Stability and safety needs include stable political environments, safety, clean and hygienic surroundings, international accessibility, friendly relations with the US, and available information. As Chen and Schwartz’s (2010) reported in their study that when customers perceive low risk, utilitarian motivation influences their choice more strongly than does hedonic motivation, but when the risk perception level reaches a certain point, hedonic motivation becomes a stronger influence (Josiam & Henry, 2014), once students consider the stability and safety needs factor for participating in a study abroad program, they may then consider hedonic needs as the second influential factor. Hedonic needs can include convenient public transportation, exciting night life, and quality shopping experiences. Even though the hedonic needs factor was not statistically significant, it had positive coefficients, indicating that students would participate in a study abroad program if the destination evokes students’ hedonic needs and satisfies their desire for fun. These results could also indicate that destination marketers and managers should work to assure potential study abroad markets of the destination’s stability in the political environment (for example, the absence of violent events, the country’s security and safety measures, and previous visitors’ positive feedback about the political environment). Once students associate positive stability and safety needs with the destination, their decision to participate in a study abroad program might be enhanced by a destination’s promotion of a better hedonic image, such as convenient public transportation, exciting night life, and quality shopping experiences.

Also, one of interesting results should be noted that three factors out of five delineated through exploratory factor analysis were not statistically significant but negatively affected students’ decisions. Cultural
attractiveness needs, utilitarian needs, and relaxed environment needs all showed a negative influence, indicating that if a destination evokes historical attractiveness, low costs, or an unspoiled and unpolluted environment, students would be less likely participate in a study abroad program. In this sense, the results of this study may disconfirm previous research which showed that international students' utilitarian motivation to get an education is a powerful predictor for moving abroad (Chirkov, Safdar, Guzman, & Playford, 2008). Therefore, marketing efforts to depict the destination's high cultural and historical value, utilitarian value (costs of program and duration), and relaxed environment may not effectively attract potential consumers.

The study result supported H2, that a study abroad experience significantly and positively affects tourists' intention to revisit the same destination. As shown in Table 3, about 90.0% of respondents who had participated in a study abroad program mentioned that they would like to return to the same destination in a future leisure trip, whereas about 19.0% of respondents who did not participate in a study abroad program mentioned that they would like to visit a destination in the future. This finding indicates that students who have participated in a study abroad program are statistically more likely to be interested in revisiting the same destination than are those who have not participated.

The study results did not support H3, which proposed that hedonic motivation is the strongest influence on return intention. The study results indicated that the coefficient of relaxed environment needs was statistically significant but negatively influenced return intention to the destination, indicating that students who perceived the relaxed environment of the destination would be less likely to revisit the same destination in the
The coefficients of the rest of the four variables were not statistically significant but were all positively related to return intention. The results may indicate that the reason students choose to come back to the same destination is because they perceive cultural attraction needs, utilitarian needs, hedonic needs, and safety needs, but is not because of relaxed environment needs. Even when a destination tried to promote a better image, participants’ intention to visit did not increase much. In fact, increased promotion of a better relaxed image combined with study abroad experience actually lowered participants’ visit intentions.

In summary, the motivations and image associated with a certain destination and actual experience with the destination through a study abroad program strongly influence an individual’s intention to travel to the same destination in the future however the selection of a study abroad destination depends on special destination image attributes. The strongest positive influence on participating in a study abroad program was stability and safety needs, while the strongest negative influence on return intention was relaxed environment at the destination. Even though the findings of this study did not support the hypothesis that hedonic motivation is the strongest influence on selecting a destination, they did suggest that destination researchers and marketers who want to attract study abroad markets need to first advertise the stability and safety of the destination. Once the destination has a study abroad population, destination marketers may need to emphasize interesting historical and cultural attraction, utilitarian needs, and hedonic needs, and boosting hedonic needs and natural and cultural attractiveness may increase participants’ and non-participants’ interest in future travel to the destination. This study
contributes to the tourism literature by indicating the importance of study abroad programs and the specific destination motivations students carry on tourism and a destination’s image. This study also provides practical implications for better serving the interests of all parties involved (e.g. students, destination players, developers, and marketers) and the recommendations provided above may help destination marketers and developers in tackling such a reality.

The results of this study are limited to the studied population and their experience of the destination, and additional research is needed to further clarify the study results by using different populations and different statistical methods.
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