

Motivations and Generic Skills of Working Holidaymakers

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ABSTRACT

Working holidaymakers have traditionally played an important role in supplying short-term workers for the tourism, hospitality and horticulture industries in both urban and regional settings. Attracting WHMs to destination brings with it significant economic benefits. This study was aimed to examine underlying dimensions of WHM motivations and to conceptualize the motivations in relation to the generic skills developed. Online survey was conducted and results were analyzed in light of push/pull conceptual framework exploring generic skills developed by the working holidaymakers and their travel motivations. Five push factors- escape, relationship, self-development, prestige, self-actualization, and four pull motivation factors- nature attraction, culture and events, humanistic resources, and work conditions were identified from factor analysis. Results show that top five skills perceived by the respondents are adaptability, social-cultural awareness, dealing with changes, planning in order to achieve goals, interpersonal understanding. Segmentation results based on travel motivations can be applied by agencies to promote working holiday schemes.

Keywords: Working holidaymakers; Generic skills, travel motivation

1. INTRODUCTION

Youth travel has become one of the fastest growing segments of international tourism, representing more than 23% of the over one billion tourists travelling internationally each year. Working holidays have been popular around the world for a long time and is a great facilitator of destination and area economy (WYSE Travel Confederation, 2017). Working holiday has become a popular type of youth travel that was developed since over a half century ago. Increasing number of countries recognize the economic benefits of attracting young overseas visitors on working-vacations as they are known in Australia; had developed visa classes specifically designed for this market. Working holidays has been long-time practice of backpackers and is now something the new generation has made into a rite-of-passage. Young people can have the freedom of movement across borders and enjoy reciprocal working holiday opportunities in each other's countries. Currently, Taiwan is among the 60 countries and territories offering working holiday visas to allow access to young travelers who are in an intermediate position of travel/migration. Overseas working holiday programs is gaining popularity among young Taiwanese, with over 200,000 applications submitted to this day (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2017).

Working holidaymakers (WHM) are substantial purchasers of key tourism goods and services, such as food services, lodging services and retail trade. The Working Holiday program has an important impact on attracting labor to regional areas, which helps to address the significant labor shortages that these areas experience. Most jobs for WHM are in the lodging and tourism sector. Attracting WHMs to base themselves in a particular urban destination brings with it significant economic benefits. Tan and Lester (2012) research found that WHMs generated more jobs than the jobs they themselves occupied.

There were many reasons why participants went abroad under the WHM program such as the desire to learn English, experiencing a different way of life/culture abroad while young, earning and saving money, travelling while gaining working experience, etc. Like Chinese old saying: experience by foot is better than by books (to travel a thousand miles beats reading a thousand books). The principle of working holiday programs is to encourage young adults to go beyond borders to explore the world. In particular, the benefits of international youth educational travel have been studied by researchers (e.g., Bos, McCabe, & Johnson, 2015; Ritchie et al., 2003; Ritz, 2011; Scarinci & Pearce, 2012). Fostering personal development is one of the most frequently reported benefits associated with international educational travel (Gmelch, 1997; Stone & Petrick, 2013). Backpacker travel has been found to contribute to an individual's personal growth and changes in many different domains (e.g., Pearce and Foster 2007; Scarinci and Pearce 2012; Tsaour and Huang 2016).

Based on findings in the existing literature, this research was aim to examine underlying

dimensions of WHM motivations and to conceptualize the motivations in relation to the generic skills developed. The following are the focus of this study: What motives young Taiwanese to participate in working holiday programs? What are the Characteristics of those WHMs according to different motivation segments? What are the skills obtained from the overseas working holiday experiences? Results of this study would be useful for working holiday participants to understand what they could expect to experience and to improve their generic skills and further to form a baseline for future studies as well as guidelines for promoting working holiday programs for administrative agencies.

Working Holiday Makers

The working holiday phenomenon developed from the youth tramping traditions of nineteenth century Europe (Loker-Murphy & Pearce, 1995; Wilson et al., 2009). The main objective for most WHMs is to travel, and the secondary objective is to work (Tai et al., 2012). Nowadays, the working holiday is a special type of travel designed for young people who travel abroad and take local jobs for the purposes of supplementing their travel budgets (Cohen, 1973; Ho et al., 2014). Accordingly, many countries have been implementing working holiday schemes for years to help youths who wish to travel but do not have enough money to do so (Cohen, 1973).

Working holiday visas are usually allowed for youths aged 18-30 years old (with few extended to 35-year-olds). The WHM's jobs are usually manual or unskilled labor (Uriely, 2001) and their occupations are mainly as hand packers, fruit/vegetable pickers, laborers, waiters, kitchen hands, tour guides, bar attendants, office secretaries, and so on (Harding & Webster, 2002; Tan, Richardson, Lester, Bai, & Sun, 2009). The visa permits the WHMs to stay in the locale for several months to one year (an additional one-year extension is available in Australia).

Travel Motivation

Motivation has been an important topic in the leisure and tourism literature since the inception of these fields of study (Crompton 1979; Dann 1981). Motivation is commonly seen as the driving force behind all actions (Crompton 1979; Iso-Ahola 1982; Fodness 1994). It is therefore a starting point for studying tourist behavior and for understanding systems of tourism (Gunn 1988). Motivation is both a key variable in understanding travel behaviors and a critical element in the destination decision-making process.

Researches on travel motivation to advance parallel theoretical endeavors such as Plog's (1974) allocentric-psychocentric theory, Iso-Ahola's (1982) optimal arousal theory, and Beard and Ragheb's (1983) leisure motivation approach. Researchers have concentrated on the development, modification, and potential enhancement of one of the existing theories of tourist motivation—the travel career ladder (TCL; Pearce 1988, 1991, 1993). Pearce & Lee (2005) study aimed at

providing empirical support for the TCP. The study found 14 dimensions to travel motivation, of which the most important were: escape/relax, novelty, relationship, and self-development. This research suggest that more studies, particularly cross-cultural, are needed for verification and supplementation of the TCP.

Generic Skills

Generic skills are defined as “the abilities, capacities and knowledge one requires to function as a sophisticated professional in an information rich society” (Pearce, 2002). The skills are prominent when employers consider hiring graduates, Pearce and Foster (2007) elaborate on the concept of these skills as eight different categories: problem solving and thinking skills, interpersonal and social skills, information literacy and management, learning, adaptability and flexibility, social and cultural awareness, management of resources, and personal attributes.

University students themselves have indicated that meaningful and practical lessons come from outside the classroom and one of the potentially influential sources for the development of skills lies in experiences accrued while travelling and taking holidays (Seidman & Brown, 2006). To correct the problems of skill deficiencies often relies on providing students with resources such as field trips, work placements and internships but there are also suggestions that international exchanges and travel experiences can play an important informal educational role (Pearce & Foster, 2007).

Travel is perceived as a way to accumulate experiences and knowledge in addition to formal education. Working Holiday provides young travelers opportunities and challenges for expanding the boundaries of knowledge. Falk, Ballantyne, Packer, & Benckendorff (2012) stated that learning resulting from tourist experiences is likely to be highly personal and strongly tied to individual interests, motivations and prior knowledge. The nature of learning from a tourist experience only emerges over space and time; and long-term meanings are influenced by their perceptions of how these experiences satisfy identity-related needs and expectations.

3. Methodology

The principal aims of the research were to examine dimensions of motivation, and improvement in generic skills of working holiday makers. A web-based survey was administered to gather data for analysis. The survey details and sampling issues are reported in the following sections.

The questionnaire was designed to gather information on respondents' working holiday motivations, generic skills developed, travel experience, and sociodemographic characteristics. Prior to questionnaire design, literature and relevant information of working holiday program were searched and studied. Several participants of working holiday program were interviewed to learn what they had experienced. Five experts and scholars in tourism field were invited to evaluate the

breadth and appropriateness of the measurement to ensure face/content validity. The questionnaire was comprised of three parts: motivation, generic skills, profile and experiences of the working holiday makers. Care was taken to ensure that each item was short, simple, and addressed a single issue.

The measurement of motivation was mainly adapted from findings in Dann (1981), Crompton (1979) and other empirical literatures (Baloglu, & Uysal, 1996; Kao, Patterson, Scott, & Li, 2008; Mohsin, & Ryan, 2003). There were 25 push motives and 27 pull motives respectively. Generic skills measurement was based on what Pearce and Foster (2007) originally developed for educational evaluations and then later used in studies of the travel industry. Generic skills measurement contained 42 statements in eight different categories: problem solving and thinking skills, interpersonal and social skills, information literacy and management, learning, adaptability and flexibility, social and cultural awareness, management of resources, and personal attributes. A 7-point Likert-type scale was used (from 1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree.) for measurement scales above.

Snowball sampling was employed to overcome the difficulties in reaching diverse working holiday maker sample. The target population for this study was Taiwanese young adults who had participated working holiday programs and the length of trip at least 6 months. The online questionnaire was posted in the working holiday forum and communities that provide access to people who share common and specific attitudes, beliefs, interests, and values. A link to the survey was posted on Kang Wen Culture & Education Foundation with a short message and sent it out with assistance of Golden Formosa Travel Company that is a tour operator specialized in working holiday program and also an authorized agent for International Student Identify Card(ISIC).

During a four-week period in September 2013, a total of 226 respondents completed the online survey. Descriptive statistics were used to examine the overall sample profile. Principal component analysis was conducted to examine the underlying motivational dimensions. K-means cluster analysis was used to classify the respondents according to their travel motivation. The profiles of the travel-motivation groups were then compared through cross-tabulation. Finally, independent *t*-tests were used to examine the differences in the generic skill factors between the travel motivation groups.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The sample of 226 respondents used in this study had more females (69.5%) than males (30.5%). More than three fourths of the respondents are in age 20s, 18.6% are 21 to 25 years and 56.6% between the ages of 26 and 30 years, 34% between 31 and 35 years, and 13% between 21 and 25 years. In regard to the level of education, 12.4% of the respondents had completed graduate

school degree, 77% had completed a 4-year university degree, 6.2% had some junior college degree, and the remaining had obtained high school diplomas. The majority of respondents (94.7%) were single, most (54.4%) went to Australia for working holiday, and a small group (20.4%) had been to New Zealand, whereas a few (10.2%) had WH experience in Japan.

The data were subjected to exploratory factor analysis using a varimax rotation to reduce the number of items associated with the working holidaymakers' motivation factors which comprised of two parts, push and pull factors. After a series of deletions, 20 items out of 25 items of push motives remained was identified that had a factor loading over .50 and a distinct five-factor structure emerged. Combined factor loadings accounted for 67.043% of the total variance in the factor pattern. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure was used to ensure that the data had sufficient inherent correlations to perform factor analysis. The Bartlett's test of sphericity tests the hypothesis that the correlation matrix comes from a population in which the variables are independent. This found that 20 items were adequate for factor analysis when KMO was larger than .50 (KMO=.873), and Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant ($p < .05$). The five push motivation factors include escape, relationship, self-development, prestige, and self-actualization. Results of factor analysis and associated statistics of push motivations of WHM are presented in left side of Table 2.

The results of factor analysis and associated statistics of pull motivations of WHM are presented in right side of Table 2. After a series of deletions, 18 items remained and a distinct four-factor structure emerged. Combined factor loadings accounted for 63.358% of the total variance in the factor pattern. The KMO index was 0.880, and Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant ($p < .05$), which justified the use of factor analysis. The pull motive factors include nature attraction, culture and events, humanistic resources, and work conditions.

The high alpha values (58-90) indicated a good internal consistency (Nunnally, 1967) obtained on the final solution and factor loadings ranged from 0.52 to 0.85 for a scale grouping 18 items in four dimensions. Overall, reliability coefficients of this study were no less than 0.35, most over 0.6 level (Hair, Anderson, Tatham, & Black, 1998), and the majority reached an acceptable level of 0.7 or more which was recommended by Nunnally (1978) indicated internal consistency is acceptable. The alpha coefficients for the push and pull factors are 0.90 and 0.89, suggesting that the items have relatively high internal consistency.

The 42-item checklist of generic skills provides an initial view of how working holidaymakers perceive the acquisition of skills. Top five skills perceived by the respondents are adaptability, social-cultural awareness, dealing with changes, planning in order to achieve goals, interpersonal understanding. The results of factor analysis and associated statistics are presented in the Table 3. After a series of deletions, 28 items remained and a distinct six-factor structure emerged. Combined

factor loadings accounted for 69.759% of the total variance in the factor pattern. The KMO index was 0.924, and Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant ($p < .05$), which justified the use of factor analysis. The factors include independent and self-motivated, interpersonal skills, thinking and decision, culture awareness, adaptability, and information related skills.

Pearson correlations among factors were examined, correlations lie below 0.80 are not considered to exhibit a problem of multicollinearity (Malhorta *et al.*, 1999). The correlation coefficients of Push motives lie between 0.263 to 0.639, Pull motives 0.199 to 0.536, Generic skills 0.500 to 0.685, all the above coefficients lie below 0.7, none high correlations appears between the factors, which exhibit good discriminant validity.

The second aim of the study was to determine whether there are different groups of working holidaymakers who vary in the skill acquisition according to travel motivation. The main point of the following analysis is to form groups of respondents who share similar motivational profiles but are distinct from other groups and may differ on demographic factors such as age, gender, education and time proportion spent on work or holiday. This study utilizes cluster analysis to examine differences in motivation which led to generic skills improvement for Taiwanese young adults participating in working holiday programs.

The cluster analysis was based on the standardized Z scores of motivation factor analysis obtained from the 205 questionnaires, with outliers being removed if standard score is greater than 3 or lower than -3. After excluding these outliers, Ward's hierarchical clustering method (distance is the distance of all clusters to the grand average of the sample) was employed to determine the appropriate cluster numbers. The optimal solution was based on a great percentage change in the coefficient of conglomeration when two very different conglomerates are linked (Hair *et al.*, 2010). The result indicated that four clusters to be used to conduct the second step.

Table 2. Results of Factor Analysis – Motivation Push and Pull factors

Factors --Push	Motive Items	Means	Loadings	Factors --Pull	Motive Items	Means	Loadings	
Escape (5.89) ^a (37.09%) ^b ($\alpha=0.82$) ^c	Just to experience freedom in life	5.54	0.75	Nature attraction (5.44) ^a (37.13%) ^b ($\alpha=0.90$) ^c	Abundance in ecological resources	5.70	0.85	
	Just need to relax	6.13	0.74		Beautiful mountain scenery	5.48	0.84	
	Just need to take a vacation abroad	6.04	0.74		Attractive national parks	5.29	0.80	
	Get away from daily routine	5.67	0.71		Attractive beach scenery	5.46	0.79	
	Be master of my own destiny	6.06	0.60		Beautiful country side	5.30	0.71	
Relationship (5.36) ^a (10.68%) ^b ($\alpha=0.86$) ^c	To develop long-term friendship with others	5.68	0.80	Opportunities to experience country lifestyle	5.41	0.64		
	Meeting new and various people	5.57	0.79		Culture and event (5.16) ^a (11.24%) ^b ($\alpha=0.86$) ^c	Convenient public transportation	5.20	0.74
	To make friends with other WHMs	5.00	0.77			Abundance in national resources	5.63	0.74
	To make friends with local people	5.16	0.71			Attractive festivals & events	4.88	0.73
Self-development (6.20) ^a (7.97%) ^b ($\alpha=0.79$) ^c	To fulfill dreams in my life	6.02	0.78	The country has good reputation		4.87	0.71	
	To explore different cultures and history in different countries	6.09	0.74	Attractive historic culture	5.22	0.71		
	Explore the world and broaden knowledge	6.18	0.73		Attractive historical sites	5.31	0.66	
	To do something meaningful	6.51	0.72		Nice climate conditions	5.00	0.52	
	Prestige (5.12) ^a (6.20%) ^b ($\alpha=0.82$) ^c	To impress others	4.89	0.85	Humanistic resources (5.89) ^a (9.29%) ^b ($\alpha=0.58$) ^c	Make friends with people from different countries	6.17	0.73
To prove myself to others		5.36	0.78	Opportunity to practice English		5.44	0.66	
Having others know that I have been there		5.16	0.68	Friendly people		6.06	0.63	
Develop and broaden my working experiences		5.08	0.54			Work conditions (5.16) ^a (5.69%) ^b ($\alpha=0.64$) ^c	A reasonable pay	5.03
Self-actualization (5.89) ^a (5.11%) ^b ($\alpha=0.77$) ^c	Need to plan my future	6.16	0.79	Plenty of work opportunities	5.29		0.71	
	Learn more about myself	5.75	0.68					
	Challenge myself	5.75	0.67					

Note: 67.0% & 63.36% (Push & Pull Factors) of variance explained, and motive items with factor loading < 0.40 is discarded. Keiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measurement of sampling adequacy: 0.87 & 0.88 (Push & Pull Factors)

a. Mean score of the factor. b. Variance explained. c. Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient.

Table 3. Results of Factor Analysis – Generic Skills

Factors	Skill Items	Means	Loadings
Independent and self-motivated (5.64) ^a (42.20%) ^b ($\alpha=0.92$) ^c	Being mindful	5.26	0.79
	Being cautious and careful	5.45	0.76
	Tolerance	5.68	0.74
	Willingness to take risks	5.67	0.73
	Perspective	5.54	0.72
	Taking responsibility	5.69	0.64
	Persistence	5.77	0.60
	Being independent	5.45	0.57
Interpersonal skills (5.49) (6.99%) ($\alpha=0.88$)	Teamwork	5.43	0.79
	Coordination and cooperation	4.99	0.77
	Interpersonal understanding	5.78	0.73
	Persuasion and negotiation	5.54	0.66
	Making and maintain relationship	5.70	0.56
Thinking and decision (5.70) (6.85%) ($\alpha=0.85$)	Decision making	5.71	0.80
	Identifying and solving problems	5.66	0.78
	Forward thinking	5.55	0.61
	Critical thinking	5.68	0.60
	Planning in order to achieve goals	5.90	0.58
Cultural awareness (5.59) (5.32%) ($\alpha=0.81$)	Understanding different culture	5.68	0.77
	Understanding and reflection on social/cultural implications	6.05	0.74
	General knowledge of geography, history, current issues of the world	5.28	0.70
	Social contribution	5.35	0.64
Adaptability (5.99) (4.62%) ($\alpha=0.82$)	Adaptability	6.22	0.82
	Dealing with changes	6.03	0.71
	Dealing with pressure and stress	5.73	0.65
Information skills (5.13) (3.78%) ($\alpha=0.77$)	Computer and IT ability	5.08	0.75
	Using and interpreting medias	5.61	0.74
	Information gathering/ research	4.71	0.73

Note: 69.76% of variance explained, and motive items with factor loading < 0.40 is discarded.
 Keiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measurement of sampling adequacy: 0.92
 a. Mean score of the factor. b. Variance explained. c. Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient.

The standardized Z scores from the motivation factors were used for K-mean analysis. The number of four clusters from observed cases were 69, 49, 42 and 45 respectively. ANOVA results was shown in Table 4. The greater cluster's mean of squares, smaller mean square error, F-value will be greater, indicates this variable is more effective in clustering.

Table 4. Results of Cluster Analysis on Motivation Factors

Cluster/ Motivation Construct	Cluster		Error		F-value	p-value
	MS	DF	MS	DF		
Escape	11.159	3	.398	201	28.015	.000
Relationship	12.334	3	.613	201	20.137	.000
Self-development	10.466	3	.543	201	19.269	.000
Prestige	20.626	3	.555	201	37.136	.000
Self-actualization	3.998	3	.531	201	7.536	.000
Nature	3.560	3	.757	201	4.703	.003
Culture and events	16.592	3	.627	201	26.449	.000
Humanistic resources	27.758	3	.468	201	59.296	.000
Work Condition	7.648	3	.805	201	9.503	.000

Note: MS means "the mean sum of squares" DF means "the degrees of freedom" F means "the F-statistic."
 P means "the P-value."

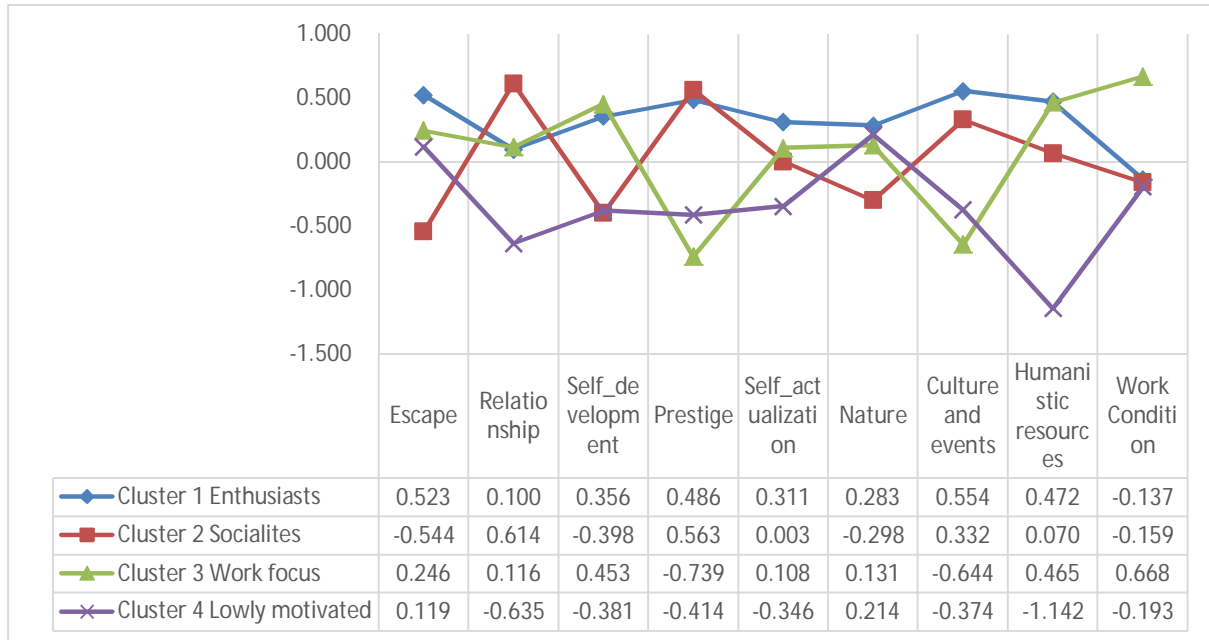


Fig.1 Cluster centers for the nine motivation factors

Motivation and generic skills

Independent sample *t* tests were employed to determine whether there is statistical evidence that the associated means of generic skills among the four clusters are significantly different. Shown in table 6, of the six generic skills dimensions were found to have a significant relationship to the clusters.

Results of skill differences among four working holidaymaker clusters revealed that all six skill factors are statistical significant different. Cluster one not only scored highest in all nine motivation factors but also ranked the highest in perceived skill improved. Cluster two scored high in interpersonal and information skills factors, comparing to cluster four and three respectively. Cluster four scored lower in all six skills factors compared to cluster one.

Table 5. Demographic factors pertaining to the motivation based WHM clusters

		Clusters			
		1(n=69)	2(n=49)	3(n=42)	4(n=45)
<u>Gender</u> ($\chi^2=21.81$, $df= 3$, $p<0.05$)	Males	14	28	13	9
	Females	55	21	29	36
<u>Country(WH)</u> ($\chi^2=22.69$, $df= 12$, $p<0.05$)	New Zealand	9	9	11	14
	Australia	36	23	28	24
	Japan	9	6	2	4
	Canada	7	3	1	3
	UK	8	5	1	0
<u>Education</u> ($\chi^2=5.77$, $df= 9$, $p=$ 0.76)	High School	3	3	1	2
	Junior College	4	2	1	5
	University	54	38	34	32
	Master or above	8	6	6	6
<u>Age</u> ($\chi^2=17.44$, $df= 9$, $p<0.05$)	18~20	3	4	0	1
	21~25	12	15	6	6
	26~30	41	28	16	25
	31~35/or above	12	2	10	13
<u>Marital status</u> ($\chi^2=1.78$, $df= 3$, $p=$ 0.62)	Married	3	1	5	1
	Single	66	48	37	44
<u>% Work</u> ($\chi^2=3.47$, $df=6$, $p=$ 0.75)	10-30	14	12	12	15
	40-60	44	28	25	25
	70-90	11	9	5	5
<u>% Travel</u> ($\chi^2=6.45$, $df=6$, $p=$ 0.38)	10-30	38	20	22	19
	40-60	29	23	18	23
	70-90	2	6	2	3

Table 6. Results of Comparing mean differences of skills among four working holiday clusters

Generic skills Factors		Statistics ^b			F-value	p-value	Post Hoc ^c
		SS	DF	MS			
Independent ^a	between groups	21.750	3	7.250	8.835	.000***	1>3, 1>4
	within groups	164.939	201	.821			
	total	186.689	204				
Interpersonal	between groups	14.684	3	4.895	6.866	.000***	1>3,1>4,2>4
	within groups	143.299	201	.713			
	total	157.983	204				
Think_decision	between groups	10.708	3	3.569	5.034	.002***	1>4
	within groups	142.523	201	.709			
	total	153.231	204				
Culture aware	between groups	10.669	3	3.556	4.789	.003***	1>4
	within groups	149.256	201	.743			
	total	159.926	204				
Adaptability	between groups	11.155	3	3.718	4.744	.003***	1>4
	within groups	157.557	201	.784			
	total	168.712	204				
Information	between groups	25.538	3	8.513	8.706	.000***	1>3,1>4,2>3
	within groups	196.541	201	.978			
	total	222.079	204				

Note : **a** The assumption of homogeneity of variance of “independent skill” is violated, alternative procedures for unequal variances Brown-Forsythe test (Modified Levene Test) & Games-Howell Test were implemented

b SS means “sum of squares” , MS means "the mean sum of squares” , DF means "the degrees of freedom , F means "the F-statistic.", P means "the P-value." *** p<0.01

c Post Hoc: 1=cluster 1(Enthusiast), 2=cluster2(Socialites), 3=cluster 3(Work focus) , 4=cluster 4(Lowly motivated)

Cluster 1 “Enthusiast” (n=69, 33.66% of total sample): The largest group of WHMs, scored highest in all 9 motivation factors, especially culture and event, nature, self-actualization. The average age was 27.54 years. Female were approximately 80% of this group. Skills developed perceived by this group of WHM including “independent”, “interpersonal” and “information” were significantly higher than “work focus” and “lowly motivated” groups. Similar to segments want -it-all (Assiouras et al, 2015) and serious minded generalists (Pearce and Foster, 2007).

Cluster 2 “Socialites” (n=49, 23.9% of total sample): This group score high in relationship, prestige; but low in self-development, nature (lowest). Male were approximately 60% in this group that is higher than other groups (Female accounted for majority in cluster 1, 3 &4 that range from 70-80%). In this group, average age was 25.96years, which was the youngest among these clusters; age higher than 30 were lower than other groups, percentage of age 21-25 were higher than other groups. In terms of skills developed, “interpersonal” and “information” were higher. The characteristics of this group can be compared to high involvement socialites in Pearce and Foster (2007).

Cluster 3 “Work focus” (n=42, 20.49% of total sample): This cluster score highest in self-development, work conditions; but was lowest in prestige and culture. In this group, average age was 28.83 years; percentage of age group 26-30 (38.1%) was lower than other groups (average 56.6%). Female accounted for approximately 70% of this cluster. In terms of skills developed, “adaptability” score highest compared to 5 other skills, whereas “information” score lowest among four clusters. Over two thirds of this cluster were WHMs in Australia, which is the highest percentage among four clusters.

Cluster 4 “Lowly motivated” (n=45, 21.95% of total sample): This cluster score high in escape & nature; lowest in humanistic resource. In this group, average age was 28.42years, which was the oldest among these clusters; age higher than 30 (28.89%) was higher than other groups. Female was 80% of this group. In terms of skills developed, this group were lowest in all six generic skills factors among four clusters, and over 30% of this cluster were WHMs in New Zealand that is the highest among four clusters.

CONCLUSIONS

The Working Holiday Visa enables to travel and work in a chosen country. More than 60 countries offer this temporary residence permit, with an age limit of 30 or 35 years old in most of them. It is a great way to gain professional experience, to explore oneself and develop soft skills that may need to a successful career.

Findings of this study will be particularly relevant to those interested in researching the travel/work connections and will provide a better understanding of the role travel plays in

influencing and shaping life decisions, particularly those related to work. It is expected that the findings of this study will also be relevant to career counsellors and human resource managers, enabling them to recognize the important impact life experiences such as those derived from working-holidays can have upon career and professional development.

In this study, respondents were segmented into four clusters to reveal motivations and what they had improved in terms of the development of generic skills when they participated in working holiday program. The study applied a conceptual understanding of “Push & Pull theory” of travel motivation as it relates to knowledge and skills learned in working holiday experience. Results revealed that escape and relationship factors formulate the core of WHM push motivations, and that the motivations of nature attraction and culture and events are the core factors of WHM pull motivations. For tourism practitioners with interests to promote WHM scheme, this study provides valuable insight into what is at the core of all WHMs’ travel motivations. Working holidays are great source for job opportunities: During working holiday, young visitors developed generic skills by working a job that unlike the regular work in their country origin. As a result of this working experience young visitors acquired skills, such as independence, decisiveness and courage, to add to the resume.

The findings of the study will hopefully lead to further empirical studies on WHMs’ motivations and WHMs in general from conceptual and theoretical basis. The core dimensions of WHMs motivation presented here needs to be validated through future destination-based studies. WHMs’ generic skills also need to be explored more, especially in terms of the idea of mental relaxation during active experiences.

This study had a few limitations. While this study proposed WHMs’ segmentation based on the travel motivations and generic skills, findings could be affected by examining WHMs from other perspective. Also, as this was a quantitative study, travel motivations were examined. Deeper understanding into the motivations of individual WHMs at different travel career stages could strengthen the understanding initiated through this study.

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