
THE RELATIONSHIPS AMONG PERSONALITY TRAITS, SELF-EFFICACY, OVERSEAS ADAPTATION AND WILLINGNESS TO WORK IN TAIWAN: EMPIRICAL STUDY FOR OVERSEAS STUDENTS

YUAN-DUEN LEE^{1*}

¹Professor, Department of International Business, Chang Jung Christian University, Changda Road, Gueiren District, Tainan 71101, Taiwan

CHIN-LAI SU²

²Ph. D. student, Doctoral Program of business operations and management, College of management, Chang Jung Christian University, Changda Road, Gueiren District, Tainan 71101, Taiwan

PI-CHING CHEN¹

¹Professor, Department of International Business, Chang Jung Christian University, Changda Road, Gueiren District, Tainan 71101, Taiwan

SHU-YI WANG³

³MBA, Program of business operations and management, College of management, Chang Jung Christian University, Changda Road, Gueiren District, Tainan 71101, Taiwan

*Corresponding Author

Tel: 886-6-278-5208

Abstract

The rapidly international and global development in past years has resulted in increasing number of international students in the world. How to retain talents therefore becomes an inevitable issue globally. Overseas students of the three universities in southern Taiwan, as the research subjects, are distributed 244 copies of questionnaire. Total 199 valid copies are returned, with the effective retrieval rate 81.6%.

The relationship among overseas students' personality traits, overseas adaptation, self-efficacy, and willingness to work in Taiwan are discussed, and the mediating effect of overseas adaptation and self-efficacy on the relationship between personality traits and willingness to work in Taiwan is also verified in this study. Descriptive statistics, validity and reliability analysis, and regression analysis are utilized for data integration and analyses.

The research results find out the significantly positive effects of overseas students' personality traits on the willingness to work in Taiwan, personality traits on overseas adaptation, overseas adaptation on willingness to work in Taiwan, personality traits on self-efficacy, self-efficacy on willingness to work in Taiwan, and self-efficacy on overseas adaptation as well as the full mediation effect of overseas adaptation on the relationship between personality traits and willingness to work in Taiwan and, self-efficacy on the relationship between personality traits

and willingness to work in Taiwan. Furthermore, overseas degree students reveal higher willingness to work in Taiwan than exchange students. Finally, suggestions and managerial implications for education, economic authorities, and future research are proposed in this study.

Keywords: Personality Traits, Self-efficacy, Overseas Adaptation, Willingness to Work in Taiwan, Overseas Students

Research background and motivation

The rapid development of globalization and internationalization in past years results in rapid increase of overseas students in the world to form the international manpower mobility. On the other hand, National Development Council of Taiwan estimated the positive population growth rate in December 2018 is about 2.3% but the negative population growth will be in 2023.

The reducing birth rate in past years annually decreases the student population in Taiwan. After joining WTO, the strong competition pressure from famous schools in the world also results in the situation of survival of the fittest in education market (Lin, 2004). The recruitment of overseas students would result in positive benefits in economy or attract excellent international talents as human capital that more recruitment strategies of overseas students and more definite and complete national policies to attract overseas students are proposed in Taiwan (Obst, 2007). Research also indicated that attracting domestic students who complete study abroad back to the country or keep excellent foreign talents staying in Taiwan would be valuable methods for return or flow-in of talents (Tung & Lazarova, 2006; Saxenian, 2005). Overseas students in the world contribute large amount of capitals to the education countries, diverse universities, and higher education departments to become major contribution to various countries (Montoya & Hayes, 2017).

In regard to talent cultivation, retention, and recruitment, Taiwan is facing internal and external challenges. Various countries also propose recruitment plans to cope with global changes, and various talents in Taiwan are facing the high-pay headhunt of enterprises in China. As a result, in addition to past talent retention and recruitment policies, overseas students staying in Taiwan for work would become a major route to increase talents in the future.

In addition to aging population structure and low fertility rate, labor population in Taiwan is reducing the percentage in total population, and lots of talents are losing due to competitive recruitment in various countries to result in brain drain; demographic dividend is also gradually losing the advantages.

Literature review

Personality traits

Allport (1961), the founder of personality traits theory, regarded personality as the dynamic organization of individual psychological system as well as the unique pattern to determine individual "thought and behavior" to decide the uniqueness of thought.

Chi, Li & Chen (2008) regarded personality as individual performance, under innate responses and environmental impact, different from others. Rotter first proposed the psychology structure of locus of control in 1954 and proposed the theory of locus of control in 1966 to explain that personal belief would affect individual positive or negative reactions. Internal/external locus of control refers to “individual opinions about the relative relationship between oneself and environment in the daily life” (Chang, 2000).

Schultz (1986) considered internal locus of control as an individual believing in the acquisition of strength or behavioral results as the results of personal ability and efforts, and the behavioral results could be expected and controlled. On the other hand, external locus of control referred to an individual regarding the acquired strength being resulted from opportunity, fate, or other’s power.

Self-efficacy

Bandura (1997) regarded self-efficacy as the core belief in individual cognition, the self-ability judgment required for achieving certain performance, and the individual belief in being able to control specific fields. The higher self-efficacy would require more efforts that difficulties and frustration would be regarded as challenges to proactively overcome. Kanfer(1987) considered that self-efficacy for specific tasks was individual idea to achieve the performance standard with physical and mental efforts. Li, Chu & You (2008) pointed it out as individual will or belief to complete or engage in certain activities.

Self-efficacy is a critical factor in individual performance and achievement. Lo (2004) studied the difference of new-comers’ self-efficacy and internal/external locus of control and found out the significant difference in the information search frequency. Chen (2004) indicated that self-efficacy could effectively predict individual achievement and behavior reaction which appeared positive effects on learning performance through learning strategies.

Overseas adaptation

Research on overseas adaptation concluded important individual factors, workplace factors, family/friend factors, and environment factors (Harrison et al, 2004). Selmer (2002) defined overseas adaptation as individual psychological regulation in a new society or perceived psychological comfort and familiarity in new environment. Harrison et al. (2004) proposed overseas adaptation as individual perceived suitability, psychological comfort, and familiarity different from foreign culture.

Adaptation could be regarded as a state that an individual adjusted personal behavior orientation, enhanced the fit between environmental needs and people’s attitudes and behaviors, and reduced conflict with others (Berry, 1992). Overseas students from different countries often faced the problems of academic and psychological pressure, when leaving the countries; sometimes there were racial discrimination and gender bias (Maudeni, 1999).

Takeuchi et al. (2002) discovered that overseas adaptation might consider the mutual effects of foreigners and the family members. Harrisoon et al.(2004) indicated that research on expatriate adjustment would implicitly or explicitly review the cause and effect of expatriates’ pressure.

Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al.(2005) and Lazarova &Thomas(2012) regarded overseas adaptation as the process of developing with time.

Willingness to work in Taiwan

Ko (1979) indicated that employment intention was individual occupational ability and concept, making evaluation on interests or work value to form the free willingness to participate in the labor market. Fu (2006) discovered that employment intention was the evaluation of ability and work value to form the free willingness to engage in the labor market.

Lin (2012) pointed out two elements to fulfill overseas employment, including the intention to work overseas and the acquisition of opportunities to work overseas. Chen (2013) indicated that Taiwanese businesses establishing factories abroad had the employment market become difficult, and high-level talents were forced to leave Taiwan for developing abroad. Chen (2016) proposed that Philippines was a major human resource output country in the world, and the increasing overseas employers created good economic performance.

(1). Personality traits and willingness to work in Taiwan

Overseas students with internal/external locus of control consider that they could predict and control the final result. When encountering frustration, they would adopt constructive adaptation and overcome unknown difficulties as well as engage in the work to achieve the goal. That is, they present higher willingness to work in Taiwan.

Accordingly, the following research hypothesis is proposed in this study.

H1: Overseas students' personality traits present significantly positive effects on willingness to work in Taiwan.

(2). Personality traits and overseas adaptation

Overseas students with internal locus of control consider that the efforts are controlled by themselves. When facing unknown environment, the perceived familiarity would be better, i.e. better adaptation. It is therefore considered in this study that, when face unknown environment, internal locus of control is important for the overseas adaptation of overseas students.

In this case, the following hypothesis is proposed in this study.

H2: Overseas students' personality traits show significantly positive effects on overseas adaptation.

(3). Overseas adaptation and willingness to work in Taiwan

Overseas adaptation is important for overseas students during the stay in Taiwan. Good adaptation to culture, lifestyles, and food in Taiwan or the social ability and positive attitudes to face pressure would affect overseas students' willingness to work in Taiwan.

Accordingly, the following hypothesis is proposed in this study.

H3: Overseas students' overseas adaptation reveals significantly positive effects on willingness to work in Taiwan.

(4). Mediating effects of overseas adaptation on the relationship between personality traits and willingness to work in Taiwan

By inferring to H1, H2, and H3, overseas students' willingness to work in Taiwan is affected by personality traits and overseas adaptation, and overseas adaptation might appear mediating effects the relationship between personality traits and willingness to work in Taiwan. This study therefore intends to discuss the mediation of overseas adaptation on the relationship between overseas students' personality traits and willingness to work in Taiwan.

In this case, the following hypothesis is proposed in this study.

H4: Overseas students' overseas adaptation appears mediating effects on the relationship between personality traits and willingness to work in Taiwan.

(5). Personality traits and self-efficacy

Overseas students with internal locus of control consider that they could predict and control the behaviors as well as present ability and confidence to affect the behavioral results. That is, the presentation of internal locus of control could be reasonably inferred to higher self-efficacy.

As a consequently, the following hypothesis is proposed in this study.

H5: Overseas students' personality traits present significantly positive effects on self-efficacy.

(6). Self-efficacy and willingness to work in Taiwan

Overseas students with high self-efficacy would be confident and proactive to overcome challenges. When facing various unknown challenges in Taiwan, such perseverance and better self-efficacy allow overseas students better grasping current conditions to fulfill individual goals in the study process and would show higher intention to work in Taiwan.

The following hypothesis is therefore proposed in this study.

H6: Overseas students' self-efficacy shows significantly positive effects on willingness to work in Taiwan.

(7). Mediating effects of self-efficacy on the relationship between personality traits and willingness to work in Taiwan

According to H1, H5, and H6, it is inferred that overseas students' willingness to work in Taiwan is affected by personality traits and self-efficacy, and self-efficacy might reveal mediating effects on the relationship between personality traits and willingness to work in Taiwan. In this case, the study intends to discuss the mediating effect of self-efficacy on the relationship between overseas students' personality traits and willingness to work in Taiwan.

Consequently, the following hypothesis is proposed in this study.

H7: Overseas students' self-efficacy reveals mediating effects on the relationship between personality traits and willingness to work in Taiwan.

Research method

Research framework

Based on above research background, motivations, objective and literature review, the research framework is constructed, Figure 1. This study contains four constructs, namely personality traits, overseas adaptation, self-efficacy, and willingness to work in Taiwan, and the control variables include gender, identity, and age and education program.

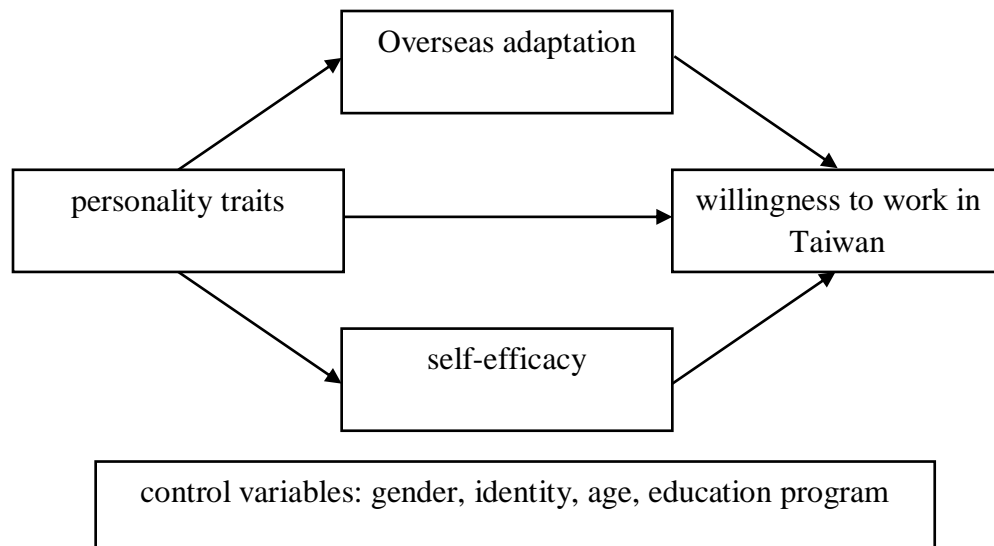


Figure1 Research structure

Research subject and sampling design

With quantitative research, overseas students in 3 universities in southern Taiwan are studied. With paper-based questionnaire and online questionnaire, total 244 copies are distributed, and 210 copies are returned. Removing 11 incomplete copies, 199 copies are valid, with the effect retrieval rate 81.6%. Most retrieved copies are from online questionnaire that the respondents' universities cannot be distinguished.

Research results and analysis

According to the research framework, the retrieved valid samples are analyzed with SPSS, and the research hypotheses are further tested. The statistics and results are also analyzed and explained.

Questionnaire reliability and validity analysis

(1) Reliability analysis

The 199 valid copies of samples are proceeded reliability analysis, and the results show the high reliability of willingness to work in Taiwan, overseas adaptation, self-efficacy, and personality traits.

Construct	Cronbach`s α
willingness to work in Taiwan	0.925
overseas adaptation	0.849
self-efficacy	0.882
personality traits	0.823

(2) Validity analysis

The questionnaires for personality traits, willingness to work in Taiwan, overseas adaptation and self-efficacy were adopted the mature measure, and discussed the wordings and statements of the items by 5 professional scholars. It is considered the questionnaire used in the study have sufficient validity.

Descriptive analysis of sample structure

Overseas students in 3 universities in southern Taiwan are studied. Total 199 valid copies of questionnaire are analyzed. The demographic variables contain gender, identity, age, and education program.

demographic variable	type	number	percentage
gender	(1)male	97	48.7%
	(2)female	102	51.3%
identity	(1)exchange students	36	18.1%
	(2)degree students	163	81.9%

age	(1)under18	3	1.5%
	(2)18~22	121	60.8%
	(3)23~25	47	23.6%
	(4)26~30	23	11.6%
	(5)above30	5	2.5%
education program	(1)undergraduate	149	74.9%
	(2)postgraduate	50	25.1%

Regression analysis of constructs

(1) Regression analysis of personality traits and willingness to work in Taiwan

With regression analysis, F value of personality traits to willingness to work in Taiwan appears 25.343, the standardized $\beta=0.338$ ($p<0.001$), $R^2=0.114$, and adjusted $R^2=0.109$, showing that the regression model could significantly explain the variance of willingness to work in Taiwan, and personality traits, in the linear model, present significant effects on willingness to work in Taiwan. The regression equation shows $WWT=0.386PT+4.636$ that H_1 is supported.

dependent variable	willingness to work in Taiwan(WWT)
independent variable	Standardized $\beta = 0.338$
personality traits(PT)	$B=.386^{***}; C=4.636$
R^2	.114
adjusted R square	.109
F	25.343***
t	5.034***

*** $p<0.001$.

(2)Regression analysis of personality traits and overseas adaptation

With regression analysis, F of personality traits to overseas adaptation shows 113.576, the standardized $\beta=0.605$ ($p<0.001$), $R^2=0.366$, and adjusted $R^2=0.362$, revealing the regression

model could significantly explain the variance of overseas adaptation, and personality traits significantly affect overseas adaptation. The regression equation presents $OA=0.863PT+9.491$ that H_2 is supported.

dependent variable	overseas adaptation(OA)
independent variable	Standardized $\beta = 0.605$
personality traits(PT)	B=.863***; C=9.491
R^2	.366
adjusted R square	.362
F	113.576***
t	10.657***

***p<0.001.

(3)Regression analysis of overseas adaptation and willingness to work in Taiwan

With regression analysis, Fvalue of overseas adaptation to willingness to work in Taiwan appears 54.948, the standardized $\beta=0.467$ (p<0.001), $R^2=0.218$, and adjusted $R^2=0.214$, presenting that the regression model could significantly explain the variance of willingness to work in Taiwan, and overseas adaptation significantly affects willingness to work in Taiwan. The regression equation shows $WWT=0.583OA+19.496$.

dependent variable	willingness to work in Taiwan(WWT)
independent variable	Standardized $\beta = 0.467$
overseas adaptation (OA)	B=.583***; C=19.496
R^2	.218
adjusted R square	.214
F	54.948***
t	7.413***

***p<0.001.

(4) Mediating effects of overseas adaptation on the relationship between personality traits and willingness to work in Taiwan

From the following table, personality traits show notable effects on willingness to work in Taiwan, with the $\beta=0.338$. Personality traits reveal significant effects on overseas adaptation, with the $\beta=0.605$. Referring to Model 2 in the table, overseas adaptation, as a mediator, appears remarkable effects on willingness to work in Taiwan, with the regression coefficient 0.414. Besides, the β of personality traits reduces from 0.338 down to 0.087 ($p<0.001$), and the explanation power increases from 0.114 to 0.223 ($F=28.109$, $p<0.001$).

According to above statements, personality traits could actually affect willingness to work in Taiwan through the mediation of overseas adaptation, and the mediating effect is full mediation. The regression equation shows $WWT=0.332 OA+1.485$ that H4 is supported.

dependent variable \ independent variable	willingness to work in Taiwan(WWT)	
	Model 1	Model 2
personality traits(PT)	B=.386***; C=4.636	.100
overseas adaptation(OA)		B=.332***; C=1.485
R^2	.114	.223
adjusted R square	.109	.215
F	25.343***	28.109***
t	5.034***	1.101 5.241***

*** $p<0.001$.

(5) Regression analysis of personality traits and self-efficacy

With regression analysis, F value of personality traits to self-efficacy reveals 176.357, the standardized $\beta=0.687$ ($p<0.001$), $R^2=0.472$, and adjusted $R^2=0.470$, presenting that the regression model could significantly explain the variance of self-efficacy, and personality traits significantly affect self-efficacy. The regression equation shows $SES=0.514PT+8.155$ that H5 is therefore supported.

dependent variable	self-efficacy(SES)
independent variable	Standardized $\beta = 0.687$
personality traits(PT)	B=.514***; =8.155
R^2	.472
adjusted R square	.470
F	176.357***
t	13.280***

***p<0.001.

(6) Regression analysis of self-efficacy and willingness to work in Taiwan

With regression analysis, F value of self-efficacy to willingness to work in Taiwan appears 43.613, the standardized $\beta=0.426$ ($p<0.001$), $R^2=0.181$, and adjusted $R^2=0.177$, showing that the regression model could significantly explain the variance of willingness to work in Taiwan, and self-efficacy significantly affects willingness to work in Taiwan. The regression equation presents $WWT=0.498SES+16.756$ that H_6 therefore supported.

dependent variable	Willingness to work in Taiwan(WWT)
independent variable	Standardized $\beta = 0.426$
self-efficacy(SES)	B=.498***; C=16.756
R^2	.181
adjusted R square	.177
F	43.613***
t	6.604***

***p<0.001.

(7) Mediating effects of self-efficacy on personality traits affecting willingness to work in Taiwan

From the following table, personality traits show significant effects on willingness to work in Taiwan, with the $\beta=0.338$, and personality traits reveal significant effects on self-efficacy, with the $\beta=0.687$. Referring to Model 2 in the table, self-efficacy, as a mediator, shows remarkable

effects on willingness to work in Taiwan, with the $\beta=0.367$. Besides, the regression coefficient of personality traits drops from 0.338 down to 0.085 ($p<0.001$), and the explanation power enhances from 0.114 to 0.185 ($F=22.260$, $p<0.001$).

Accordingly, personality traits could affect willingness to work in Taiwan through the mediation of self-efficacy, and the mediating effect is full mediation. The regression equation reveals $WWT=0.314 SES+3.197$ that therefore H7 is supported.

dependent variable independent variable	willingness to work in Taiwan(WWT)	
	Model 1	Model 2
personality traits(PT)	B=.386***;C=4.636	.098
self-efficacy(SES)		B=.314***; C=3.197
R^2	.114	.185
adjusted R square	.109	.177
F	25.343***	22.260***
t	5.034***	.961 4.136***

*** $p<0.001$ 。

Conclusions and suggestions

Research conclusions

(1) Relationship between personality traits and willingness to work in Taiwan

It is discovered in this study that personality traits present significantly positive effects on overseas students' willingness to work in Taiwan. That is, under internal locus of control, they consider the efforts could make changes that the willingness to work in Taiwan would be higher. Consequently, personality traits would affect overseas students' willingness to work in Taiwan.

(2) Relationship between personality traits and overseas adaptation

The significantly positive effect of personality traits on overseas adaptation is also discovered in this study. That is, under internal locus of control, they would be more active when encountering unexpected situations and even frustration. When facing unknown challenges in Taiwan, they present stronger adaptation to learning, interaction with Taiwanese, and living in Taiwan.

(3) Relationship between overseas adaptation and willingness to work in Taiwan

This study points significantly positive effects of overseas adaptation on willingness to work in Taiwan. That is, when facing unknown challenges, good adaptation to learning, interaction, and living would relatively enhance willingness to work in Taiwan.

(4) Mediating effects of overseas adaptation on the relationship between personality traits and willingness to work in Taiwan

This study finds out the significant mediating effect of overseas adaptation on the relationship between personality traits and willingness to work in Taiwan. After adding overseas adaptation, the effect of personality traits on willingness to work in Taiwan becomes insignificant that it reveals full mediation. In other words, under internal locus of control, overseas adaptation is affected, and under high overseas adaptation, willingness to work in Taiwan is promoted.

(5) Relationship between personality traits and self-efficacy

It is discovered in this study that personality traits present significantly positive effects on self-efficacy. That is, under internal locus of control, self-efficacy is relatively higher when presenting stable emotion on pressure and challenge.

(6) Relationship between self-efficacy and willingness to work in Taiwan

This study indicates the significantly positive effect of self-efficacy on willingness to work in Taiwan that, under high self-efficacy, they would work harder to achieve the objectives and show higher willingness to work in Taiwan.

(7) Mediating effects of self-efficacy on the relationship between personality traits and willingness to work in Taiwan

It is discovered in this study that self-efficacy reveals mediating effects on the relationship between personality traits and willingness to work in Taiwan. After adding self-efficacy, the effect of personality traits on willingness to work in Taiwan becomes insignificant that it shows full mediation. In other words, internal locus of control influences self-efficacy, and high self-efficacy also enhances willingness to work in Taiwan.

(8) Both of overseas adaptation and self-efficacy show parallel mediating effects on the relationship between personality traits and willingness to work in Taiwan.

Research suggestions

(1) Suggestions for education and economic construction authority

According to the research analysis, overseas students show high willingness to work in Taiwan; however, the variance analysis of identity to willingness to work in Taiwan appears higher willingness to work in Taiwan of degree students than exchange students. It reveals that the friendly education environment allows degree students, with longer study period, presenting deeper perception and being attracted. It is therefore suggested that domestic education and economic planning and development units should formulate attractive talent retention and introduction policies to develop the demographic dividend of overseas students.

In terms of management practice, the research results find out the significantly effect of personality traits, self-efficacy, and overseas adaptation on willingness to work in Taiwan. It is therefore suggested that universities should recruit overseas students with internal locus of control, high self-efficacy, and overseas adaptation.

(2) Suggestions for future research

Regarding the research subjects, overseas students of three universities in southern Taiwan are sampled. Future research could aim at all overseas students of universities in Taiwan or non-Asian overseas students in order to understand the talent flow of students from Europe and America.

In regard to academic program, most samples in this study are undergraduates. It is suggested that postgraduates could be added as the research samples.

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